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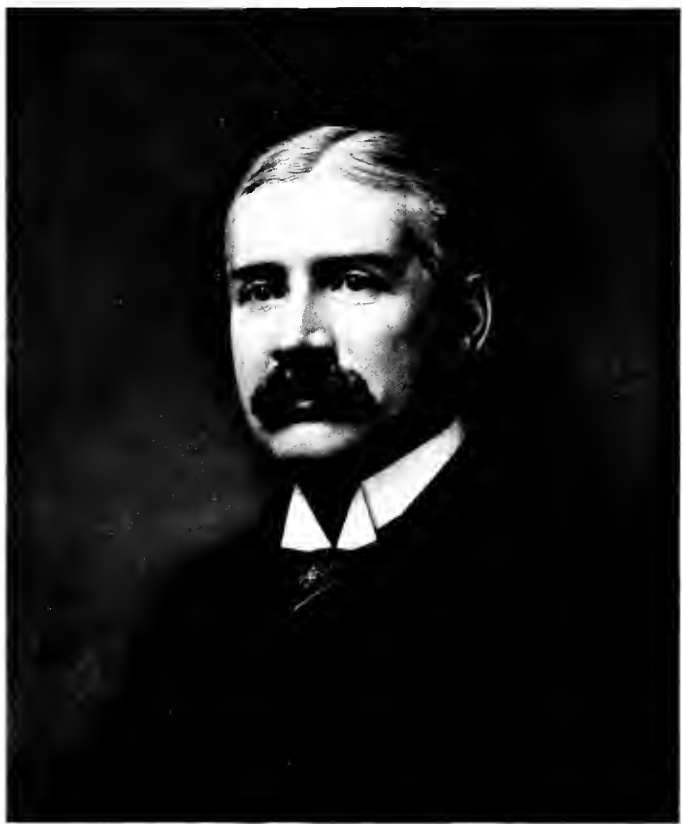
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SALEM, 1904.

# TENT AND HOME

## AND OTHER SERMONS

BY  
THE REVEREND  
JAMES FAIRBAIRN BRODIE, D.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
PROFESSOR JOHN WRIGHT BUCKHAM, D.D.  
OF  
PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

*A Memorial Volume*



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## **James Fairbairn Brodie**

**September 24, 1854**

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## FOREWORD.

In response to requests from many sources this volume is issued.

“The power of an endless life” was pre-eminently Mr. Brodie’s message in his later preaching. For this reason the preference in choice of subjects has been given to sermons on immortality and kindred themes.

To all who are living nobler lives because Mr. Brodie walked with them and showed them the Way, this book is dedicated.

HELENA GLEASON BRODIE.

AUBURNDALE, MASSACHUSETTS.

May 6, 1912.



## INTRODUCTION.

JAMES FAIRBAIRN BRODIE.

These sermons will reveal the mind and heart within them better than any words of another. And yet a brief and simple word of appreciation may help to wing them on their way.

Clear-minded, true-hearted, wide-visioned, devoted to the highest and best things in life, James Fairbairn Brodie seemed called of nature as well as of grace to the Gospel ministry. Many of the traits of his Scotch ancestry were his at their best: sterling character, faith in God and man, talent for essentials, power to get at the marrow of a subject or a situation. A teacher and pastor by divine gift and appointment, he loved his calling and honored it. No part of the work of the church, no member of it, but commanded his hearty sympathy and service. Nor was his ministry confined to the church. Into the charities, the philanthropies, the civic life of the community he entered with an ardor and public spirit that knew no limitations. In the fellowship of the churches he was recognized not only as a leader, but as a boon and beloved comrade. His heartiness, his wit, always most kindly, his generous, out-spoken interest in all the churches, made him a force for friendliness and unity in that fellowship which he once described as "far larger and richer than any of race or locality, than any of mere association of man

and man. Its foundations go down unto the very depths of the divine life and the divine love."

For fullness of life and wealth of service this life seemed intended. For many years he had it, years of mental vigor, of fruitful service, of honor and of joy. Then came the swift bereavement, the translation of the dearly loved daughter of the manse, days of illness and trial. It was as if the strong man came to see more clearly than the rest of us the largeness and finality of the Life

"Where loyal hearts and true  
Stand ever in the light"

as compared with the life here. As one drawn by a vision whose fascination absorbs him he moved patiently, steadily, bravely toward the Goal. And when, at the end, we looked on his calm, victorious face, we knew that he had attained.

No truer tribute to the character and influence of this sterling life could be made, than that contained in the following words of a friend who worked close by his side, as Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association of Salem: "Doctor Brodie kept alive one's faith in human nature. There were great elements of strength which were never used except to help. Willingness to give liberty and the ability to maintain it for himself, conscientiousness that made everyone safe in his confidence, judgment that always gave the benefit of the doubt. There was nothing to surpass the comradeship of his nature."



“For all the saints who from their labors rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!

“Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;  
Thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;  
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light. Alleluia!”

JOHN WRIGHT BUCKHAM.

Berkeley, California,  
May 28, 1912.



## THE EARTHLY TENT AND THE HEAVENLY HOME.

*Jesus answered and said unto them: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again. But He spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, the disciples remembered that he had said this unto them.—John 2: 19, 21, 22.*

*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.—II Cor. 5 : 1.*

A touching incident is related of Dr. Lyman Beecher, a giant himself in gifts of mind and speech, as well as father of a family of giants. "At the close of a long and arduous career, he passed under a mental cloud. The great man became as a little child. One day after his son, Henry Ward, had preached a striking sermon, his father entered the pulpit, and, beginning to speak, wandered in his words. With great tenderness the preacher laid his hand upon his father's shoulder and said to the audience: 'My father is like a man who, having long dwelt in an old house, has made preparations for entering a new and larger home. Anticipating a speedy removal, he sent on beforehand much of his soul furniture.

When later the day of removal was postponed, the interval seemed so brief as to render it unnecessary to bring back his mental goods.' " "Beautiful words," says Dr. Hillis, who tells the story; "describing those whose strength is declining, whose spirit is ebbing and senses failing, because God is packing up their soul furniture that they may be ready for the long journey that awaits us all." But the figure so aptly and touchingly applied by the great Brooklyn preacher was not original with him. He had learned it from the book which more than any other had been familiar to him from his childhood. He was just borrowing and adapting the language of Paul, which Paul in his turn had taken from the saying of Christ. To-day let this imagery, which is common to both of our texts, serve us as a kind of parable for our reading anew of the great Easter message.

Our Lord in the days of his flesh spoke of His body as a destructible temple, to be permanently rebuilt again, as His disciples remembered after He had risen from the dead. In like manner speaks Paul the Apostle in case of such at any rate as are the followers of Christ. Only he fills out the figure a little farther. This body of the flesh he pictures as a tent, pitched to be a habitation for us through our brief stay here on earth. Ere long we shall move out of it. Then will there be a house of enduring built for us to move into, with our own soul furniture, to inhabit eternally

as home of our own. Whether or not the apostle may have had it in mind, there was an event back in the history of Israel which his picture copies to the life. It was when Solomon moved the ark of the covenant and other furnishings of God's holy house from out the old, transient, perishable, wilderness tent, into the new temple, built of enduring material and grounded on the living bed-rock. In a way those two structures were very unlike each other. The contrast was wide between them. One was of curtains and cords drawn over a movable framework of light acacia wood; the other was of massive hewn stone, and beams from the forest of Lebanon. The one was adapted to wilderness life, to pilgrim conditions, could be taken down in a night, and the place which had known it would know it no more forever; the other belonged to a city which hath foundations, solid as if itself part of the very mount of God on which it stood. The one was a mere tent, held lightly with stakes and cords to the top of the earth; the other was a temple, so solid and splendid as to rank among the seven great wonders of the ancient world. But in another way those two structures were no less remarkably alike. Both were after the one pattern which had been showed in the mount, only in the temple every measurement was doubled. But, chiefly, they were alike, aye, more they were identical in their contents and furniture. It was the same ark of God which had dwelt within curtains, that en-

tered into its enduring rest in Solomon's Holy of Holies. The same two tables of the law were there, the same glory of the Lord from between the cherubim shone upon it. The holy place, too, in the new house had for its furniture the identical pieces which had been in the old perishable tent. The golden altar of incense, the seven-branched lamp of gold, the table overlaid with gold for the shew bread were the same in both the tent and the house. Here were things which were neither displaced nor disused, much less destroyed, when the earthly tent was dissolved, and the enduring house was substituted. And this is the great Christian object lesson of the resurrection and the life of the world to come. It is precisely the picture given us by Paul of his own faith in the matter. "For we know that if the earthly house of our tent be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In simple outline it is Christ's figure for what was to come at the close of his own earthly life. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again." And it is of first worth for us as object teaching because the facts it brings out are those which most concern us to know. Many things as to the life after death it leaves still in the dark, but the main, vital things it makes fairly clear.

And there is first the fact of which there is occasion enough for us all to be well aware. This body of flesh in which we have our life here on the earth is very much like a tent. It is a rather frail and

perishable structure. It is adapted to pilgrim conditions rather than to a city which hath foundations. It is subject to continual shifting and change. After a few years, the physiologists tell us it has become an entirely different body from what it had been before; as no doubt the curtains of Israel's wilderness tent were renewed many times from its first pitching at Sinai till it was at last taken down at the dedication of Solomon's temple. And in like manner, the time comes at last for our earthly tent to be disused and dissolved. It disappears, like tents when a camp is broken, and the place which has known it knows it no more. How true to the fact is the picture thus far, hardly needs to be pressed.

But there is another fact connecting very closely with this. While the earthly tent comes down, perishes, dissolves, not so the life dwelling in it, nor yet the furniture of it. There is a field white with tents and all bustling with life as the sun goes down. Look again next morning when the sun is up. Not a tent or a sign of life to be seen. What does it mean? Has all that life ceased to exist? No, it simply means that an order came in the night, and that the army had marched. That old Hebrew tent in the wilderness, after it had stood for some time in a place, would suddenly be taken down, folded up, dissolved. What did it mean? The shining cloud which betokened God's presence dwelling within it had moved from it. The ark, the altar, the table, the

candlestick of gold had also been moved. Like this is it when man's earthly tent is dissolved. Death, as we call it, does not mean the end of our human life. It means breaking camp. It is the last and great moving day. And it is not to be tent-life any more, but living in a house. So the old earthly tent is left behind as being of no farther use. But the man himself with his God given spirit lives on. Furthermore his spiritual furniture, his soul's household goods go with him, as ark and altar, candlestick and table, went from their place in the tent to a corresponding place in the temple. Conscience, will, reason, character, these are things which death does not touch. They are the life and furnishings of man's earthly tent, which are still to be his life and his furnishings for the house eternal in the heavens into which he will move. Much of course will be very different. How different it is idle for us to be guessing. Enough to say that it will differ as the strength of a house from the frailty of a tent, as the house outmeasures the tent in the room it gives for fullness of life. But in all the vital and golden things of life it will be the same. The gold of personal character, of love of the mind and the spirit will have the same place in the heavenly house as in the earthly tent. And how the truth of this sets forever at rest certain anxious questionings of ours. Shall we be able to identify our dear friends again in the life beyond this? How can it be else, when the things which are identical in both tent and house are the



personal things. Would Solomon's temple be a strange place for the high-priest to enter after having been in the old wilderness tent, year after year? Holy place and Holy of Holies were the same shape as before, only much larger. There was the identical ark of the covenant with its mercy seat and cherubim and glory of the Lord. Golden altar, candlestick, table were the same as before, familiar to him as the face of a friend. With all else that might be so different, here was enough he could recognize to make him entirely at home. If you were traveling to all parts of Palestine today, you would have weeks, it may be months, of living in a tent. In that short time some fellow traveler, unknown to you before, might become your fast and lifelong friend. Suppose after your return you were invited to visit him in his home and you found him living in a stately house with everything about it after the similitude of a palace. Would you not readily recognize your friend, though you had never seen him before except in pilgrim dress and living in a tent? If he were in very truth your friend, the things by which to identify him would be the same in the house that they had been in the tent. Shall we know our dearest friends again in the life to come? What is it by which we know our dearest friends here in this life? Is it by the dress they wear or the house in which they live? Is it not rather by the spirit they are of, by their qualities of mind and heart, by such soul furniture as thought and

love and character? Since these are things which death cannot touch, things which go over from the earthly tent into the heavenly house, must we not surely recognize our friends again? It was so that the closest friends of Jesus knew Him again, after He had risen from the dead. Much was very different. In many ways his form was strange to them. His body was no longer the earthly tent in which he had dwelt among them. But His mind and heart, His will and character were the same as before, and unmistakable. He talked to them of the same things which had been the burden of His message in the flesh. His ministry for them was the same that it had been of old. The old tone of command was there to mark Him as Master. The print of the nails was there to tell of His self-sacrificing love. These were the things by which the disciples knew it was Jesus, after the temple of His body was destroyed and He had raised it up again, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In like manner shall be our recognizing of friends in the life to come. By such things as thought and love and character shall we know them, by the soul furniture with which they have moved on, out of the transient earthly tent, into the enduring heavenly house. Here is reason enough in itself to satisfy us that so-called spirit manifestations are false. The alleged spirits never come directly to those who have known them best on earth. There is always a medium and usually a total stranger. Then the so-called spirits are always

sadly out of character. The soul furniture is altogether strange and without identity. The spirit of a Shakespeare has lost all marks of genius and originality; the spirit of one's dearest friend lacks the very qualities which made him dear. Not so did Christ show Himself alive after He had risen. He showed Himself directly to His disciples, and His mind, His thoughts, His interest, His will, His love, His sympathy, His whole character, were identical with what they had been before. So when the earthly house of our tent shall be dissolved, it is these things of the mind, the heart, the character by which, in the heavenly house, we shall surely identify our loved ones and be ourselves identified. Is it a gifted mind we have known as it dwelt here in its earthly tent? We shall know it as the same mind there in its heavenly house, with room large enough for all its gifts. Is it a character, golden in its purity, its strength, its preciousness, with which we have been familiar here in its frail tent of flesh? There, in its enduring eternal house, will the gold of it be familiar as ever to us, with all else in perfect keeping with it. All that the old pilgrim tent ever serves us while we live in it here, the new house in the city which hath foundations still will serve us and immeasurably more besides. No piece of our soul furniture which makes life so sacred and so precious for us here in the earthly tent, but will have place in that building of God, and there will reach its fullest and most fitting use,

One other truth, very vital, very weighty, this Easter object lesson of the tent and house cannot but bring very close to us. What are we making of our life while it is still the earthly tent in which we live? What sort of soul furniture are we giving place to in our tent life? Are we living for the golden things of mind and heart and conscience, or only for such things as make the curtains of our tent? Is our tent furnished in its holy of holies with an ark of God for the keeping of His will and the manifesting of His glory? Has it the golden altar of a prayerful heart in its holy place, and the golden mind, whose light is the truth of God, whose bread His word? These are the soul furnishings which we every one may have while still tenting in this body of our flesh. And these are goods which can be packed at a moment's notice for moving into the new eternal house. Death has no power over such things as these. They are the immortal things. They are the things in which our human identity consists. Then for the sake of such things let us live our earthly life. Let a good conscience, a devout and loving heart, a spiritual mind, a Christly character have place in our perishable tent. Then when the time comes for it to be disused and dissolved, we shall be rich in goods to carry on into the eternal house, we shall have wherewith to be altogether and eternally at home in the city which hath foundations; where we shall know as also we are known and have part with Him who died for us and rose again, who is the resurrection and the life.

## THE PARABLE OF THE EAGLE'S NEST.

*As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him.*—Deut. 33 : 11, 12.

Singular language this for a man who had insisted that he was not eloquent, that he was slow of speech and of a slow tongue. God's promise to Moses, "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say," had been signally kept, to judge from this song of his, breaking forth at the close of his life. Moses' slow tongue had become capable of the loftiest poetic utterance through these forty years that God was with it. The outcome of it was command of language such as this: "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass." Even a man slow of speech and of slow tongue may safely summon both earth and heaven to listen to his words so long as God be with his mouth. At any rate it was human speech rising to sublimest heights, when Moses spoke in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words

of this song. And in all the Song of Moses, running throughout in so choice a strain, there is no point at which the music is richer, or the effect finer than in the sentence of our text. Both in motif and in phrasing it is well nigh unsurpassed. Let our hearts be open this morning to receive this scripture doctrine, dropping as the rain, distilling as the dew in language so graphic, so copiously suggestive. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, hovereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him."

Doubtless it was from the scenery of Mount Sinai that Moses borrowed this figure. That solitary region with its mountains of naked rock was just such a place as the golden eagles resort to for making their nests. High up on some towering cliff of Horeb, the mount of God, many an eagle, no doubt, had its eyrie and cradled its young. Up those rugged heights Moses himself had climbed to receive that law which was the charter of Israel as covenant people of God. There, among the rocky solitudes where young eagles are born, was the real birthplace of Israel, the holy nation. What so natural, then, as that the very situation should have furnished Moses with his figure. Almost literally could it be said that Israel, as the covenant nation, was born and cradled in an eagle's nest. And here, as at so many points, the life of God's chosen people serves as object teaching of truth for man's individual life.

What a picture of our human life is the eagle's nest, first of all from the very location in which it is found. The brow of some jagged cliff, or shelf in the face of some beetling precipice is the favorite place with the eagle for building its nest. Up at a height so dizzy the young eagle enters upon its life. Only to think of the place is enough to make your head fairly swim. What if the young eagle looks out over the edge of the nest? It sees down into frightful depths yawning below it! What if by any chance the eaglet should fall out of the nest? One shudders at the bare possibility of disaster so swift and so deadly. How like this birthplace of young eagles is the situation in this world of our human life. As we begin to look out upon our life and get some idea of its bearings; as we become aware of the conditions on which we have it, the mysteries surrounding it, and the risks involved in it, is it not much like peering out over the edge of an eagle's nest? It is a dizzy height at which we find our life set for us, when we begin to discover what it really means to live. We look out across its narrow boundaries and realize that there is not only a sky above us, but that there is an abyss underneath us. We see this life of ours to be not only a thing of grandest possibilities, but at the same time a thing of perilous liabilities. It is a sublime thing for a man to live. And at the same time it is an exceedingly risky thing. A single glance into the depths that break sheer down from the nest in which humanity

is cradled is enough to startle, almost to appall us. We shrink back and crouch in the little hollow of our immediate surroundings. What if we should fall out of the nest? What if life with us should go all to loss and waste? Who that has taken life at all in earnest but has experienced somewhat the haunting and horror of such a thought. And the glimpse we get while gazing into the abyss of lives which have gone to ruin sharpens the torture with which we feel the risk to ourselves. Then how ready we are to start the question, "Why have our lives been given us subject to such conditions and involving such risks? If God be wise, if God be kind, should he not have put us into the world in such a way as would have made it altogether a safe thing for every one of us to live? With all that there is of hazard and peril open to each one of us in the course of his life, with the awful liabilities to evil by which life is beset, like an eagle's nest on the brink of some beetling precipice, can God be wise at all, can God be kind at all? Is He a Heavenly Father, all-good, all-loving, who subjects His children to such exposure?" How commonly the goodness of God gets challenged after much that fashion. The various speculations of people upon things human and divine, how very largely they are that old question revamped and patched over so that it shall not seem quite so threadbare. Do not all our discontents with life, all our complainings about it, all our demurrers at it, sum up very nearly to this? If God be



really good, why should our life, as he appoints it to us, be attended with so much of hazard, be exposed to such fearful risk? Here certainly is occasion for reading the parable of the eagle's nest and learning its primary lesson. Why does the eagle resort to such a dizzy and dangerous place for building its nest? Because the brood it builds for will be eagles and not barn-yard fowls. A nest in the flat of the earth, out of which there is no risk whatever of falling, may do well enough to hatch goslings in. But it will never do as the place for young eagles to be born. The king of birds, whose throne is above the clouds, whose kingdom is the upper air, must have its very birthplace somewhere up toward the sky. The chosen spot for cradling its life is the brink of a precipice, not because the place is hazardous, but because it is high. The loftiness of the situation is the essential thing about it. Possibility of falling is simply incident to that. Very much in the same way is our life set for us in this world, with all there is of risk and of peril lying open beneath it. God appoints it to us to live, subject to such conditions, exposed to such risks, because he means us to be men and not merely things. There are orders of existence all about us in the world which are beset by no such liability to evil. But they are the lower orders of existence. They are so far down in the scale of being that there is no such thing for them as danger of falling. But this human life of ours, God has set high up in the scale of

being. Well-nigh, if not quite at the summit of all his creation has he put us, by the very nature he has given us to bear. Only a little lower than the angels has he made us,—only “a little lower than God,” the Revisers have it. He has “crowned us with glory and honor.” Not because the place is hazardous, but because it is high, our life is appointed for us in this world in the way that it is. The risk attending it, the depth of peril lying open beneath it is simply the incident of its sublime situation, of the exalted possibilities which open out above it. The essential thing about our human life is the height of it. Its risks are just the adjunct to that. Did God intend us to be mere things, subject wholly to blind material forces, like stones of the earth or trees of the wood; did God mean us to be nothing higher than the beasts of the field with instinct their law and nature their sufficiency, He could have exempted our life from the very conditions which involve for us its most serious risk. But God intends us to be men, with minds of our own, with wills of our own, with souls to call our own. So he has given us our life according to such spiritual conditions as give room for the exercise of mind and of will, as are ground for the possession of one's own soul. Because there is a spirit in man by which he is capable of rising up into fellowship with God himself as an eagle can soar up toward the sky, human life in this world is conditioned in the way that it is. God has created us to be

free in the high, tonic atmosphere of moral responsibility, as the eagle is free in the wide fields of air. Therefore he has given us a life to live which is beset by temptation to evil, which has the depth of peril lying open beneath. But to question the wisdom and goodness of God because that is the fact, is really asking, would not God have been wiser, would not God have been kinder to have put us somewhere lower down in the scale of being, to have made us something poorer than human, something less noble than men? To complain of our life for the downward possibility it holds is really to complain of it as making it possible for us to rise to loftiest heights, mounting up as on eagles' wings to the purity and blessedness of heaven itself. Are there any of us who for one cause or another have come to be more than usually aware of this hazardous phase of our life? Have we been peering out over the edge of the nest and having a look into the depths that lie open beneath? Let it not betray us into any small-minded discontent with our life. Let it rather serve to convince us more fully how great, how sublime, how sacred a thing it is to live. Let us take this to ourselves as primary lesson from the imagery of the text. Though the gulf be deep that lies open beneath the nest, after all it is of small account compared with the measureless expanse of the heavens that hang open from above. So of our human life here in this world. Though the depths be sheer and fearful which yawn under-

neath, into which it is possible for us to fall; after all they are of no great extent compared to the heights immeasurable that open out above, into which it is possible for us to rise, and in them have fullness of spiritual life. For such sublime possibility God brings us into the world, as the eagle its nestlings for the upper air. By this is God's wisdom, is God's goodness to be judged, and not by the downward possibility incident to it. That there is the downward possibility He does not let us forget, because He seeks by all means to guard us against it. But the mere fact of it is no more out of keeping with God's goodness and kindness to the children of men than the abyss beneath the nest is out of keeping with an eagle's fondness for her young. And what is the fact? Naturalists tell us that of all the birds the eagle has the strongest parental instinct. No other bird is so pains-taking and alert in the mothering of her brood. With an affection fairly fierce she hovers over her young, caring for their safety, providing for their need. So far from failing in fondness for her nestlings being indicated by the fact that they are cradled in so perilous a place, she is all the more solicitous for them on that very account. And it is so of God's solicitude for us in view of the liabilities to evil which our life involves. It shows no lack of kindness and goodwill in God that life is given to us on such conditions. It is quite in keeping with His love for us and mindfulness of us. For is it not those very

possibilities of evil which have called forth His compassion and love in their fullest, tenderest expression? To save us from evil, to keep us from going down into its depths, what love to compare with what He has shown, what pains to be named beside those He has taken. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us." "Herein is love, because God sent His only begotten Son to redeem us from evil, that through him we might have life." Rather than question God's goodness because liability to evil is involved in our life, is it not for us to behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, in that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, that with Him He might freely give us all things?

And now we are ready for the further lesson from the eagle's nest which the text more particularly points. With Moses it was a picture of the way in which God dealt with Israel as a nation, when once it had fairly set out on its covenant life. Equally is it a picture for us of the way in which God deals with each individual life amid all the risk and temptation with which it is beset. The time comes when the eagle ceases from brooding over her nestlings, and from covering them with her feathers in the little hollow of the nest. An entire change appears in the way she deals with her young and the nest in which they were cradled. The mother-bird becomes intent upon getting her eaglets out of the eyrie. With wings

out-stretched, she offers them a place on her back where they may be taken and carried. As they keep clinging to the edge of the nest she goes among them and forcibly pushes them out. She even tears apart the sticks which herself has taken such pains to build together, that her young ones may no longer have them for support. What has come over the royal bird? Has she suddenly lost her mother-instinct? Does she care no longer for the brood she once cherished so fondly? Has she become their enemy and betaken herself to fierceness and cruelty against them? Not that at all. Her mother-instinct is strong as ever it was. Only she has made a total change in her method of showing it. That stirring up of the nest and that seeming cruelty to the nestlings, are dictates of the mother-instinct, quite as much as was her brooding before. They are simply the pains she is taking to make sure that in due time her eaglets shall be able to fly. Does she push one of them out of the nest and start it falling down toward the depths? Instantly she swoops with a still swifter drop, darts underneath, and before her little one can strike upon the rocks below, it comes to rest upon her soft feathers, between her untiring wings. Then, soaring upward again, bearing it upon her wings, she renews her efforts in teaching it to fly.

Sir Humphrey Davy tells that he once witnessed above one of the crags of Ben Nevis what he calls the very interesting sight of "two parent eagles

teaching their offspring, two young birds, the manœuvres of flight. They began by rising from the top of the mountain, in the eye of the sun. They at first made small circles, and the young birds imitated them. They paused on their wings, waiting till they had made their first flight, and then took a second and larger gyration, always rising toward the sun and enlarging the circle of their flight, so as to make a gradually ascending spiral. The young ones still and slowly followed, apparently flying better as they mounted; and they continued this sublime exercise, always rising, till they became mere points in the air, and the young ones were lost, and afterward their parents to our aching sight."

A similar sight, no doubt, Moses had witnessed more than once above the crags of Mount Sinai, through all the years he spent in that region. At any rate it supplied him a most significant image for God's care and pains with his people. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him."

And how true to our human life this picture still continues to be. How much in the experience of each one of us it serves to reflect and interpret. So much comes upon us in the course of events that seems adverse and unkind. When we have just got ourselves fairly settled down in some well-feathered, comfortable nest, some untoward

thing comes in to stir it all up. Earthly supports upon which we have been resting ourselves, easy and content, are suddenly pulled away from beneath us. What does it mean? Are such things to be looked upon as the providence of God? Has God anything at all to do with bringing them to pass? Then what are we to think of God? Has He turned from us in anger? Has He no more interest in us? Has He forgotten to be gracious? Has His love turned to cruelty and His kindness to hate? Surely it is nothing of the kind. Not in the love of God toward us or in the goodness of God to us is there ever any change. There is change only in the way He takes of manifesting His love, of giving effect to His goodness. And can we think that God's love has less resource to it than the instinct of one of his creatures? The eagle's mother-instinct prompts her to make sure that those nestlings of hers are made aware of their wings. It is her part to help them find their wings, to show them of what flight they are capable to take all pains in teaching them to fly. Rather than that any offspring of hers should not attain to the flight of an eagle, she tears to pieces the very nest which she herself had built for its cradle. And shall God, whose offspring we are, be at any the less pains with us? Can He be content to let us remain all our life long mere nestlings, compassed within the little hollow of earthly supports and never finding our wings? Is He our heavenly Father, all loving, all wise? Then shall



He not be concerned to make us aware what capacity there is in us to mount up as on eagle's wings into the high atmosphere of living in fellowship with Him? Shall He not take every possible pains in getting us to exercise our spiritual powers and be at home with himself in the free air of heaven? Rather than that we should fail to rise up into that freedom and largeness of life that is open to us as His children, does it not belong to Him as our Father even to push us out from the nest of mere earthly comforts or pull away from beneath us the mere earthly supports, when we incline to settle down amid them and make ourselves wholly at ease? As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so does the heavenly Father lead us, care for us, bring us to fullness of life. What kind of a life would it be for the young eagle were he to remain always in the nest, clinging to the sticks and the brush, when he has wings which will support him in midair, and will enable him to move swiftly and securely through all the wide heaven? And what kind of a life is it for any of us, to live, seeking to nestle at ease in some little hollow of mere earthly comforts, clinging to them for sole support, when we are able, if only we will, to mount upon wings as eagles; by trust in God, by the obedience of children to Him as our heavenly Father, to move free in the sublime fellowship of heaven itself. Shall we not rejoice in Him for His

faithfulness in teaching us this, even when it is by stirring up the nest and pulling it from beneath us as means of support. It is never His way to leave us at that. Swifter than the flight of an eagle He rideth on the heaven for our help, and "underneath are the everlasting arms."

And then the eternal security of it. When once the young eagle has come to the use of its wings, the abyss beneath the nest is no longer any peril to it. So of our human life both for this world and the next. When once it mounts up into the purity, freedom, largeness of sonship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no longer the exposure to peril and risk. And is there not occasion enough for us all to be rising up out of our earthiness into this high atmosphere of spiritual living? We are so ready to attach ourselves to some mere earthly support, when we might be committing ourselves unto God and be free with the liberty of His children. But God in His love for us does not mean that we shall continue to be of the earth, earthy. By all the dislodgments and changes and stirrings up that He brings into our lives, He bids us take notice that He does not mean it to be. What He means is that we shall rise to the height of a life that is akin with His own. To help us find our wings, to make us able to uplift and support ourselves upon them, He spares no pains even to pulling away of the earthly nest underneath. Let us take it not only as what God means with our life, but also as the

meaning we ourselves put into our living. So shall we go on to ever more and more of the eternal life which is in knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. "As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him."

## THE CHRISTMAS JOY.\*

*Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.*—Luke 2 : 10.

*When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*—Matt. 2 : 10.

The Christmas story, as told in the New Testament, is not all in one account. To get anything like the whole of it we must read at least in both Matthew and Luke. And the two accounts are not exactly, nor even very nearly alike. Not that they disagree with each other, but that what one tells is for the most part left out of the other. A few things, however, are the same in them both. In each the place is Bethlehem of Judea, the city of David, and the three central figures, the Holy Child Jesus, Mary his mother and Joseph. One other fact belonging to the birth of our Lord has place with both Matthew and Luke. It is the joy of that first Christmas time. This is the message for which I ask your hearing, especially, to-day. The Christmas joy and its exceeding greatness. "Good tidings of great joy" was the announcement from Heaven when Jesus was born upon earth. "They rejoiced with exceeding great joy" was the experience of

\* Prepared for Christmas service 1903. The South Church was destroyed by fire the night before. This sermon was never preached.

the wise men when they came to the place where he was.

Here, then, we may be sure is the true keynote for us to take in all our keeping of Christmas. The birth of Christ is occasion with us for the utmost joy. It is an event to awaken exceeding gladness in every heart. Rejoicing, pure and full, is what it arouses. And, in one way or another, it is this association which has come down to us through the centuries of Christmas custom. Wherever it is observed at all, it has some aspect of a festival. Its coloring is bright, its tone jubilant, its atmosphere cheery. Where it has run to wildness and excess, as in the Yule feastings of our own Saxon fathers, it was from mistaken attempt to make Christmas a time of exceeding great joy. Our phrase "Merry Christmas," while colored by the revelry of old English custom, still serves as a witness of the gladness which connects with the coming of Christ. "Good tidings of great joy to all people" is the story of the Christ child born in Bethlehem of Judea. "Exceeding great joy" there is for all, who come reverently and wisely to the place where he is.

It is hardly needful to speak of the desire for joy which all people have. It is one of the things always to be taken for granted. When you meet people who are entire strangers to you, there is no occasion for you to ask them if they want to be happy. You are entirely sure that they do, before ever you have any acquaintance with them. The

desire for joy is as universal as humanity itself. It is part of the human nature that is common to us all, to care for and long for happiness. Now here is something with which the coming of Christ to the world was closely concerned. This is one reason why it is a message for all people; because its tidings are of great joy, and joy is what all people want.

So this, for one thing, is what the birth of Jesus is to mean to us. It helps us to be sure that it is right for us both to want and to have the utmost of joy. Sometimes we are in doubt about that. We wonder if there is not something wrong in our desire to be happy. We get the idea that goodness requires us to choose the unpleasant things of life rather than to take pleasure in living. It is much in this way that many people think about the Christian life, about religion in general. Christ's call upon people to deny themselves in becoming his disciples they take to mean that they are to give up wanting to be happy and are to be willing to live a joyless kind of a life. Some even try to be Christians after that fashion. They seem afraid of too much enjoyment in life. But not such is the idea which Christ gave of religion, either in his teaching or by his coming to the world. His Sermon on the Mount he began with the word "Happy" eight times repeated; his birth in the Bethlehem stable was announced as "good tidings of great joy" to all; the very sight of him in his babyhood was occasion for wise men to rejoice

with exceeding great joy. The life of Jesus from its very beginning in his manger cradle, the teaching of Jesus throughout, the calling of Jesus to all people to be followers of him, are all of them together, the Gospel. They are good news to the world, glad tidings of great joy to every person. What could do more than this to assure us that the longing for joy so universal and deep seated in the heart of humanity is proper and wholesome; that we are not wrong but right in wanting to be happy. Christ did not seek, like Stoic or Hindoo philosopher, to pull up by the roots this human longing for joy in order to save men from the evils of life. Rather did he come for answer to it, to feed and fulfill it. His coming was the Heavenly Father's gift to his needy children on earth. It is he who makes known to us that God is our Father, and that he wants us all, calls upon us all, to be children of his. Is not that just another way of saying that God wants us all to have fullness of joy? Just that is what completes the showing. There are other indications that God means us to have a life that is exceeding joyful. The fact that he has made us capable of joy. The fact of so many things for us to enjoy in the world where he has put us to live. But we are capable of sorrow as well as joy, and there are painful as well as pleasant things in the world. So we are still in wonder if God does really mean and desire us to be happy. Then comes the message of Christ, born into our human life, to show us that God is our

Father, and that he means us, wishes us, to live as children of his. Does not that settle it concerning God, that joy not sorrow is God's will for us? Is happiness something we long for? It is proper and right that we should, for it is what God himself desires us to have, in fullest measure. This, for one thing then, is the message of Christmas. It is our Father's good pleasure that we should both wish to be, and succeed in being, happy. "Good tidings of great joy" he has sent to us all by the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. His birth as Son of man at Bethlehem of Judea is occasion for us all to be rejoicing with exceeding great joy.

For another thing, this Christmas message is the key which opens for us the secret of seeking and finding the utmost of joy in our lives. We ourselves wish to be happy. God, who is our Father in heaven, wishes us to be. How is the end to be brought about? This also is answered in the good tidings of great joy at the birth of Christ upon earth; this, a part of the exceeding great joy with which the wise rejoice at his cradle. It is pictured in the very fact that he who came bringing fullness of joy upon earth entered into a life of hardship and suffering himself. The cheerless surroundings amid which he was born; the homelessness of the stable, the discomfort of the manger, help to tell us the secret by which joy for our human life is fulfilled through him. How is it? Not by having to do only with things in life which are



agreeable and pleasant, and having nothing whatever to do with painful and distressing things. That way of trying to be happy is often taken, but it is always much of a failure. It is the way of people who are mere pleasure seekers. They live solely for what they call "having a good time." They try to deal entirely with things which will give them pleasant sensations and endeavor to put aside things which are in any way painful and saddening. But it is an experiment that always proves vain. Tried as often as it has been and is, living for pleasure is proverbially chasing a will-o'-the-wisp. The trouble with making agreeable sensations the end to live for is that they will not stay at the end. There is always something coming after them, some form or other of reaction from them. Pleasure seeking is a path for avoiding what is painful in life, which sooner or later is sure to bring us around to things most distressing and painful.

Nor is the secret of joy, as Christ opens it to us, found by closing our eyes to what there is of evils and sorrow in the world and looking only at what is agreeable and good. There is a way of trying to be happy amid the ills and distresses of life by making light of them, by calling the evil good and banishing sorrow into some kind of forgetfulness. But this is not the way of Christ. Nor is it ever for long a successful way. For, as one has well said, "Shut your eyes to evil, and when you open them again, you will see it is in the same place,

doing the same work. Evil is not the shadow cast by the good, but the cloud that hides the sun and casts the shadow; not the silence implying sound, but the discord breaking the harmony." Christ's secret of joy, amid all that is so evil and painful in the world, is not any form of trying to run away from it, but such dealing with it as overcomes it and gets some service from it. It was a picture of it as he lay there, a babe in the Bethlehem manger. He came into this world, not at a place where everything was most attractive and comfortable to him, but at a place where, from his very cradle, he had hardship to bear and evil to face. He lived his holy life as Son of man, not by keeping the wrong of the world out of his sight and trying to think that there was nothing very wrong about it, but by close contact with it, by knowing how bad it is, what suffering it causes, and by suffering because of it, himself. The secret of Jesus, touching happiness for our human life, was disclosed to the full in his cross. For the joy set before him he endured that. Upon his part it was the joy of overcoming evil with good, of such suffering for it as would serve for the saving of multitudes from it. There is a saying of Jesus, himself, to his disciples just before he parted from them to go to his death, which tells very plainly this secret of his. "Ye shall be sorrowful," he said to them, "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." He promised them a life as followers of him, not free from things to cause them suffering and sadness, but with power

in it by which the suffering should be turned into comfort and the sadness into rejoicing. That is the true Christmas joy. That is why the coming of Christ into the world is tidings so glad and cheering. There is exceeding great joy for us all to rejoice with over the coming of Christ, because he took to himself the ills and hardships and sorrows of our human life, and turned them into occasions of comfort and gladness, because he took our very sin upon him, so strove with it and suffered from it as to give us occasion for joy of forgiveness from it and victory over it. To-day let us all enter anew into this Christmas joy. Let us delight ourselves in God our Father, in the love wherewith he loves us, in that unspeakable gift by which he commends it to us. Let us have it for our life to be the children of God through Jesus Christ, and the very sorrows and sufferings incident to it will be turned into joy.

## THE MORE ABOUNDING LIFE.

*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*—John 10 : 10.

A many-sided mission of Jesus was the coming as Son of man on the earth. In his own teaching he has described it now in one aspect and again in another. As pertaining to divine law and human duty he said, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill." As a matter of relation between himself and his Father he said: "I came not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." As it has to do with our humanity on the side of its need and shortcoming, he said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." His mission to our humanity, on the side of its best capability, is the account he has given in the sentence before us. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"; to put us into full possession of our human life; to make that life for us the most abundant possession.

The connection of this with his picture of a good shepherd keeping and feeding his sheep, helps to make the meaning of it clear. The good shepherd leads his flock forth from the fold, not to some region where the pasturage is scanty and it is much as ever that a living can be picked from it, but where

pasturage is so plenty that there is more than enough. When the feeding gets so poor that the sheep must nibble all day long in order to live, the good shepherd takes them to some other place where as the Psalmist has pictured it, they may lie down in green pastures, after they have fed to the full. Like this is what our Lord says he has come to make out of life as a possession for all who will be his disciples. That life for them may be not a bare having but an abounding. To strengthen the impression of it he brings into contrast with himself others whose leading of men had resulted only in robbing them and making life for them a poorer and barer thing. The Pharisees, with their formalism, had emptied life of all but the outer shell, had made a sepulchre of it, with nothing attractive to it but a little whitewash on the surface. Sadducees, with their scepticism, had sapped the very soul from out it and reduced it to hardly more than an animal existence. The Essenes exhausted it with useless self tortures, till there was little left to it of all that is richly and blessedly human. In sharp contrast with these and with all other ways in which human life is robbed of its humanity, and made a poor and beggarly thing, it was the ministry of Christ to make human life most thoroughly and abundantly human, to put every person into full possession of all the wealth of his life, to make life for everyone of us the richest and most enduring possession. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

In the most outstanding and obvious way the truth of these words is to be observed in the history that has been made since Christ came into the world. How vastly human life has been enriched since the coming of Christ and in consequence of it, is written so large across the face of nearly a score of centuries that no one with eyes can fail to read it. By as much as human life to-day is more abundant, more humane, in so many ways better worth living than in the age of Tiberius Caesar, so great is the witness from history that our Lord spoke the truth in this saying of his. For the great forces at work through all the centuries since, making this world of ours a better place to live in, making man's life a richer possession, have sprung indirectly at least,—most of them directly, from the teaching and ministry of Jesus. Nor was it long after he appeared on the earth that his work of putting men in possession of their life, of making the life of man a more abundant possession, began to show itself on a scale large enough for history to note. The first followers of Christ were soon much in evidence to that effect. In the midst of an age when life was so cheap that suicide had become fairly fashionable, almost a fad, here were men and women by the thousands who were taking a fresh lease of life, or rather, were taking such strong and secure hold on life, as was not a lease of it at all, but an ownership, from which not death itself was able to dispossess them. And not only was their hold on life so free, so firm, so lasting, but

the wealth of it, in all that makes life worth having, gives it resource, substance, zest,—was equally great. How abundant a possession was life to such a man as Paul the Apostle! When once he had left behind him the poverty and emptiness of his Pharisee days, and had entered into the freedom and fullness of living as a follower of Christ, what enlargement, what enrichment, life took on for him. No amount of hardship could belittle it for him. Bonds and imprisonment could neither narrow it in, nor rob it of its riches. He might suffer the loss of worldly things, but none the less he had the whole world to live for. Life to him, as an Apostle of Christ, was world-wide. In the matter of its interests, in the matter of its sympathies, how vastly his life exceeded what it had been before. As a Pharisee, life's interest all centered for him in one race of people. He had no sympathy for anything but what was strictly and narrowly Jewish. As a Christian, his sympathies had room for all races and classes of men. His interest was no longer limited by any such terms as Jew or Greek, Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free. All were one humanity, and everything human had interest for him. Very small, very empty was the world in which he had lived as straitest of the sect of the Pharisees. But the world in which he lived as chief of Christian apostles was a very great world, a world very full of all that makes human life an abounding and glorious thing. All this he had been put in possession of by the coming of

Christ, Son of man, his Saviour and Lord. Nor was he at all a solitary case in that first Christian age. He was simply a splendid specimen of what Christ was making out of life for a multitude of other disciples. In writing to one community of them Paul went so far as to assure them, "The world is yours, life is yours, things present, things to come are yours" all "because ye are Christ's." It was a chief mark of Christianity from the first, that while it calls men away from a life that is worldly, it puts them into new and more abundant possession of their life as it has to do with the world. Our Lord's programme for his followers was not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should overcome it, and then live on in it, as masters of it and not as its slaves. His calling of men was to service high enough, great enough to be mastery both of the world and of life. To be losing one's life for his sake was to be finding it again, an enlarged, an enriched, and enduring possession. Along with his summons, "Come learn of me for I am meek and lowly of heart," is to be placed his beatitude, "For the meek shall inherit the earth." And just that is what those first disciples of his proceeded forthwith to do. They took possession of the earth. They proved property for their Master and for themselves in everything of real worth that was then in the world, and realized for it a still greater value. Greek learning, Roman law as well as Hebrew ethics, they entered into as a part of the permanent Christian possession.



They became heirs of all the ages, and made human life in all fields of it a far more abundant and glorious heritage. This effect of early Christianity, so "remarkable, so salutary, not on individuals only, or in limited communities, but on the scale of national life, and in countries and capitals most advanced in arts, industries and accumulated resources"; has been finely outlined in the following words. "It came to communities cultured in letters, instructed in arts, but to a great extent morally rotten with luxury and lust, the prey of degraded and savage passions, the story of whose life, the picture of whose manners are almost too fearful to be contemplated. Christianity, in its worship, its humanity, its charity, in the inflexible fidelity to truth which it demanded, and in the heroic energy of faith toward an unseen Master which it inspired, struck down upon this ancient life, in the most cruel and dissolute capital, as a veritable gleam from worlds celestial; and though it encountered tremendous resistance of law, argument, fierce invective, stinging satire, of the society which it rebuked, of the government which it challenged, of military opposition, and of popular persecutions unparalleled in the frenzied fury of their onset,—it overcame that resistance, awakened an enthusiasm which spurned and curbed the assailing hostility, converted some of its noblest champions by its amazing serenity amid storms, and finally became master of the empire by its moral force, aided by whatever of Divine Providence we

may recognize in its history." If all this be true of Christianity in its earliest centuries, how manifold more in these that are latest! If within so short a space after the coming of Christ human life was so greatly enlarged and enriched as its direct result, who shall undertake to cast up the total of all that in one way and another His coming has done to make life in this most Christian age of the world a capacious, an abundant and glorious thing. At any rate we, of all people, are in best position to read what history has writ thus large, that Jesus, Son of man, spoke within sober bounds of the truth when he said; "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

But it is not on the large scale of history, alone, that the truth of it appears. Equally well is it to be observed at closer range, even inside our own acquaintance with life. Within the field of literature, a modern man of letters has said: "The most sure way to enrich life is to learn to appreciate trifles." It is an excellent description of the way in which human life is enriched by the teaching and ministry of Christ, if instead of "trifles" we say "the minutest details." For as Christ puts men into possession of their life there is nothing trifling about it. The smallest and commonest things which enter into it are of moment. The wealth to be realized from them, by the calling and spirit of Christ, goes far to make human life most abounding and rich. Something like this is true in the region of merely material wealth. It is either from

small things or common things that greatest abundance of it is to be had. The richest treasure of the world is in things of very small bulk. The gems, the jewels, the gold of the earth are the merest particle of its solid contents. It takes only a little of such little things to make one immensely rich in the common, material sense. Along with this is another way in which human life is enriched on its material side; and that is by turning common things to some use not known or not available before; it is a chief way in which science has added so vastly to the wealth of the world. It has taught men to get service and value out of what was waste material before. Great industries are thriving and making people rich to-day, by working up what was counted rubbish fifty years, twenty-five, even ten years ago. Edison brings the force of magnetism to bear in the mining of metals, and the common, low grade ores, which were worthless before, become a new source of wealth. Is it not an excellent illustration and quite up to date, of the way in which Christ by his coming to earth has enriched our human life? By giving us the gold of it, its very gems and jewels to possess in the little details which go to make up faithfulness, that crown of all living. By bringing to bear upon the commonest, ordinary, every-day things of our life such a divine magnetism, such attraction of spiritual force as will make them yield riches in wealth of character, in the worth of manhood, according to the stature of Christ. For, as Ian Maclaren has so finely said:

“After all, the greatest affair in life is the creation of character, and that can be accomplished as well in a cottage as in a palace. Finer webs, with more lasting and richer colors are wrought in poor Eastern huts, than in huge sounding manufactories whose black smoke trails across the sky. It was in a very humble home that the Perfect Man lived; and he has made the great success, who, by patience and obedience in that which is least, has grown into the likeness of the Son of God.” And just that is life, as Christ came to put everyone of us into possession of it, to make it a most rich and abounding possession for everyone of us, if only we will have it for our own. “Power to become the sons of God” is what he gives “to as many as receive him.” And what other power on earth can begin with that for enlarging, enriching, glorifying the whole life of man? Where is the detail of life so small but that under this power it takes upon it the luster of a jewel? Where is the commonplace of life so ordinary, but that it yields what is noble and worthy under this power? The “power to be sons of God”;—it is the power of love. As one has said: “The value of living is loving.” No kind of wealth so enriches, adorns, beautifies life for any person as the love that enters into it. How many an humble home has been made by love the richest of earthly habitations! How many a palace hall has been poverty stricken and beggarly, because love had no abiding place in it! It is simply impossible for any human being to have possession enough of

anything else, of money, of position, even of knowledge, to make life for him anything but empty and forlorn, if he is hateful and gets himself generally hated. At the very time when Jesus spoke these words of our text, there was one such man in the world. He held the throne of the Caesar's with all its fabulous wealth. Incense was burned to him as if he were a god, not because anybody admired him, but simply because he had the force to compel such action. None had any love for him, not even his nearest of kin. For years he lived practically alone on a beautiful island, with every luxury about him, except that choicest luxury of life, the love of friends. What poverty so deep, so abject, as that of Tiberius Caesar! Beside him how rich was Jesus of Nazareth, when he had not where to lay his head, even when he hung upon the cross. For love of true hearts for him was there, in his own great heart overflowing toward all mankind. And what love of countless millions he thereby drew to himself! We speak of "the poverty of Jesus." Poverty! No man ever lived upon earth who was so rich! Human life came to its fulfillment in him, because there was love at the full. And that same abounding possession he makes out of life for all who will be his disciples. By taking him for our life, possession so rich and eternal we secure to ourselves. In relation to God it makes life all love for us, because the acquaintance which Christ gives us with God is as "our Father," and the spirit he gives us is that of sonship with his Father and

ours. In relation to fellow men, love is what Christ makes of life for us, for in him all men are our brothers. Is life a thing we hold dear? Would we have it a possession, ever more abounding, even eternal? Then let us, ourselves, belong to Christ. Let his love dwell richly in us and our love be given to him. Life is ours, the world, all things are ours, when we are his. "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

## NOVEMBER MOODS AND NOVEMBER MINISTRIES.

*It was the ninth month on the twentieth day of the month: and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter and for the great rain.—Ezra 10 : 9.*

*And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire and received us every one, because of the present rain and because of the cold.—Acts 28 : 2.*

“When chill November’s surly blast  
Made fields and forests bare,”

is the keynote struck by the gifted Scottish poet when his singing was to be in a minor strain and his music a dirge. A sensitive soul was that of Robert Burns, and sensitive especially to the changing moods of human life. With fine poetic instinct he creates for his verse a November atmosphere when his theme is man’s inhumanity to man, and the mourning which it makes. It is the sombre aspects of life, its moods of pensiveness and pathos which are commonly associated with this month of the year, the eleventh in our calendar, but in the Jewish the ninth, as also in the Julian, from which our month’s name comes, and in our own down to a century and a half ago. November days,

with their shortening sunlight, their leaden skies, their bleak winds sweeping the wreckage of summer's wealth and beauty across bare fields, are apt to have a touch of sadness in them and bring something of depression upon our human spirits. Our own poet Bryant, so expert to catch and read the varying expressions which nature wears upon her face, has sketched it to the life in these few lines:

"The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,  
Of wailing winds and naked woods, and meadows brown and  
sere.  
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie  
dead,  
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.

"Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately  
sprang and stood  
In brighter light, and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?  
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers  
Are lying in their lowly beds with fair and good of ours.  
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain  
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely flowers again."

Something of that same touch of nature, making all the world akin, is given at places in the scripture. Two such places, one in the Old Testament, the other in the New, are before us to-day for a text. There is the November atmosphere to them both, as both belong to the month of November. The earlier was at Jerusalem, in the days of Ezra the great Jewish organizer and reformer. The work of resettling the land of Israel with its



own people after the exile was over, and of planting their divinely ordered institutions of worship and living once more upon covenant soil, had gone on to signal and substantial success. The House of God, as well as the city walls, had been rebuilt, if not in all the grandeur of Solomon's day, at least upon a goodly scale in view of the small numbers and the poverty to which the people were reduced. Once more worship of the one living God, in purified form, was going up from the holy hill and the holy house which he had chosen for his name and his service. And along with purified worship had come, as a matter of course, deep searchings of heart, great tenderness of conscience. The new sense of God among the people, their intensified reverence for him and devoutness toward him had turned their thoughts upon their own ways of living, and given them a new sense of what was wrong in their customs and habits. Having forsaken idols for good and all and committed themselves to serve the one living and all holy God, they were made painfully aware of certain remnants of heathenism still marring their manner of life. Alliances by marriage with idolatrous people were still common among them. It was a vexing problem. Their consciences were troubled about it, and their hearts were sore, for it touched their home life with attachments and affections in many cases, no doubt, deep and strong. After much prayer and humbling of himself before God, Ezra the reformer gathered great numbers of them to-

gether at the lately rededicated temple in a November day. There, under the dripping November sky, filling the street by their new house of worship, they sat shivering in the wet and with the inward uneasiness chilling and depressing their spirits. It was a forlorn and melancholy spectacle, the November atmosphere without matched by the inward mood, by November of the spirit and soul.

The other scene belongs to that life most eventful of all in the Scriptures next to the life of Jesus himself. They must have been November days, those first passed by Paul on the island of Malta. It was a little after midsummer when he left Caesarea on the voyage to Rome, in charge of Julius the centurion and his imperial guard. Ordinarily they should have reached Italy in the early days of September. But head winds held back their little coasting vessel, as, hugging the shore, she beat slowly northward, and then to the west. Hardly half way to her home-port she touched at a landing from which one of the last wheat-ships for the year from Egypt to Italy was just setting sail; and her passengers for Rome were transferred. Still the winds were ahead and the sailing was slow, the greater ship being many days in making a distance which she would commonly travel in less than twenty-four hours. Much time went by while she lay wind-bound, in an offing, on the south shore of Crete. Already the equinox was passed and the Jewish fast which followed it. It was doubtless well into October before they had

the fair and favoring wind which proved such a weather breeder. Then came the storm, with no glimpse of sun or stars in many days, driving the ship helplessly and hopelessly before it for two weeks at least before it beached on an island unknown at the time. If it were not already November when the 276 of them, crew, soldiers, prisoners and passengers, all got safe to land in Malta, it must have been very near to it. In the three months spent there before another ship for Italy would venture forth from her winter's berth, most of November, perhaps the whole of it would be included. So it is the November atmosphere again, and something of the November mood, described in these words of Paul's companion through the voyage, the shipwreck and the stay at Malta. "And the barbarous people showed us no common kindness; for they kindled a fire and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold." The two, together, serve well for picturing to us the bleaker aspects of our human life, the sinking of our human spirits, which have come to be associated with this season, after the wealth and charm of summer have vanished, and before winter mantles it all over with its white charity of the snow. In the one event we see the company of conscience-smitten Jews, sitting in the street before their sanctuary, shivering from heartache within and November wetness without: in the other event the ship's company, of many races, Latins, Greeks, Egyptians, as well as Jews,

just ashore from the wreck and their drenching in the sea, huddling over the fire for warmth and if possible to dry their clothes, while the rain kept pouring down upon them, in the midst of barbarian people, who, for all they knew, might be more cruel than the ocean and the tempest. If ever a November atmosphere might well bring on November moods, it was in situations such as these.

But along with November moods were also November ministries and mercies. For the conscience-smitten Jews, trembling at the word of their God, and depressed in spirit by their sense of guilt, intensified by frowning skies above them, these were most fittingly expressed by their leader in a sentence of his prayer: "And now for a little moment, grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a little reviving in our bondage." Their deepened sense of God was more than a quickening within them of conscience, with its reproachings and accusings. It was also a clearer perceiving of the tender mercy and abounding ministries of their God. There was light for them upon the clouds of their drear November sky. Their tremblings before their God were such as to magnify his holiness and his good-will in their eyes. Their repentings toward him were revealings anew to them of the divine purpose and power in the redeeming of their life. "Our God hath not forsaken us, but hath extended mercy to us in the sight

of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem."

In like manner was it with Paul and his shipwrecked company, when cast upon an island whose people were barbarians, a horde of savage wreckers, it might be, living upon spoils from out the sea. But it turned out that they were humane and merciful barbarians. They were barbarians given to hospitality, ready and abounding with ministries to the distressed travelers cast upon their mercies in the November wet and cold. Paul, especially, became a guest of honor with the chief man of the island, was bountifully provided for and sent away full handed, when the winter's stay was over. It was a clear case of November mercies and ministries coming to the relief of November moods in some of their most forbidding and depressing aspects. And in a way the case is typical, as was also that in the earlier days of Ezra the reformer. November days have their place in the calendar of our human life, not only by way of contrast with the cheer and promise of May days and the rareness of a day in June,—they also bring their own peculiar blessings with them. They give place for some of life's most helpful deepening, and most valuable enriching. There is a certain tonic in the November atmosphere, along with its bleakness and discomforts. The moods of mind and spirit associated with it are not necessarily morbid. There is a lowliness of heart which is wholesome, which belongs to rest and redeeming of the soul,

according to the word of Christ. He gave to humility a place forever among the graces of the fullest human life. And so it is, not because life may be enjoyed more highly than is good, but because the real and full joy of life is something with depth and breadth to it, as well as height. It is in certain of the November moods that we discover how deeply the foundations of our life go down, and how broadly they are laid, that the up-springing and up-building of it may reach to fullest heights. Many a building can not have more stories added to it because the foundation of it is not laid deep and broad enough. In like manner is it with the building of human character. If it is to go on and up, to have the higher stories and fitting finials to it, there must be the deep and broad foundation at the bottom. This is why the Christian glad tidings of great joy to all people have for their foreword, "Repent ye." A deep sense of sin, like that with which those Jews sat shivering before their sanctuary in the November chill and wet, is a deepening of our human life for the one foundation upon which it can be built up to its true and full proportions. The worth of it is not in itself, but for sake of what may rise heavenward from and upon it. Conscience awakened with a sense of sin is the soul's awakening to a sense of God's long suffering and tender mercy for saving from sin. Repentance, in its Christian meaning, is a Godward step. It is not only turning with sorrow away from one's own wrong-doing and shame;

it is a turning of the face toward love divine and help divine in Jesus Christ, for deliverance therefrom. The sorrow of it is that out of which the purest joys and highest worth of life are born and brought to all their fullness. For that November mood of life, the mercy is God's own tenderest compassion, the ministry that of a Saviour who himself suffered unto death that he might be the giver of eternal life. It is not for us to speak lightly of those old-time Jews, for their trembling before their God that bleak and chill November day. Something of such November might be spiritually seasonable in our modern religious life. Some such deep and heart searching sorrow over what there is of shame and blame upon our part, would no doubt be followed by a rising to loftier spiritual levels in Christianity of to-day. Occasionally there is a November with unclouded skies and mellow airs, and we easily fall to wishing that all Novembers might be thus serene and sunny, thus free from wet and chill and gloom. But we may be sure it will not be so. Such are exceptional Novembers. The character of the month does not permanently change. November will continue to be a name for what is sombre and saddening in aspect. So, while it seems, just now, as if the penitential aspects had largely disappeared from our religious experience and life, it will not always be so. With so much of evil as there still is in the world, there will come seasons again of awakened conscience, of deep and heart searching sorrow for

sin. And with the November mood will also come the November ministries of mercy. Upon the deeply moral foundation of thorough repentance will be built up new heights and excellency of Christian living and spiritual manhood.

And likewise there are November ministries and mercies, for those other November moods, brought on by the stress and suffering which fall to the lot of many good people in the world. That such a man as Paul should have head winds to sail against, should be for weeks at the tempest's mercy, and then be shipwrecked and cast away among barbarians—amid the November wet and cold—how sombre and depressing the aspect it puts upon our human life, and upon this world, in which we have the living of it! Was it not enough that plotting Jews and conniving Roman officials and other evil minded men, should be against him, hindering his good work, without the very wind and storm and rigors of the season conspiring with them? But amid all this, which was so forbidding, there came to Paul some of the choicest and most blessed of all his mercies. Was it not well worth his while to suffer all that stress and suspense of the storm at sea, in order to have meanwhile the revealing to him of the God, whose he was and whom he served, saying, "Fear not, Paul; thou shalt stand before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." How that entire November season brought out the splendid manhood of that prince of Christian men. Nowhere



else was life grander and richer with him than in this so stern and strenuous a chapter. Nowhere else, with him, did the note of gratitude to God rise higher. In the sequel to it we read of him that he thanked God and took courage. It is with a finer and deeper fitness than we often think, that our Thanksgiving season is in November. It is a time of year when we may well be specially sensible of God's mercies and ministries of goodness to us, not simply because it comes after the full ingathering of harvest, but also because the tenderest mercy of our God and some of his choicest ministries, meet us where life seems to us stern and bare and drear, meet us amid our own poverty of spirit, in our tremblings and humblings of ourselves before our God, along the passages of life which are marked by stress and suffering. Both Burns and Bryant had their eyes upon this truth when they gave the November atmosphere to the poems from which we have quoted. Before he completes his Dirge, "That man was made to mourn," Burns himself assures us that the title is misleading:

"This partial view of humankind  
Is surely not the last;  
The poor oppressed, honest man,  
Had never sure been born  
Had there not been some recompense  
To comfort those that mourn."

And Bryant so sings the "Death of the Flowers" as to make it, at the close, an earnest of the immortal life:

“And now, when comes the calm mild day as still such days will  
    come,  
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;  
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late  
    he bore,  
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no  
    more.

“And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,  
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side;  
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the  
    leaf  
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;  
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours  
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.”

This is the November whose prospect is not  
“the winter of our discontent,” but the eternal  
springtime in that Paradise of God, whose tree  
of life is fruit-bearing every month and its leaves  
fade not, for they have in them the ministry of  
healing for all our human ills.

## MADE AFTER THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE.

*Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.*—Heb. 7 : 16.

This statement is descriptive of Jesus our Lord in his life as Son of man on the earth. It is cast in the mould of Hebrew thinking and Hebrew tradition, inasmuch as the readers for whom, in the first instance, it was intended, were Hebrews. It is part of a passage setting forth the mission and ministry of Christ in the terms of Old Testament priesthood. All the dignity and sanctity which the Jews associated with their priestly orders are attributed to him. And more than that, for the priesthood of Jesus is here pictured to those Hebrew people as being of a higher order than the highest in their hereditary system. Not to their high priest himself belonged an office and ministry so exalted or so effectual as his. For what Jesus was in his person and character, and what he did in service to humanity, gave him a priesthood of another order than that of Aaron and his sons,—a diviner and more enduring order. He was made, not after the law of carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life; that

is, made a priest, as it is written in this letter to the Hebrews.

But the truth of it is by no means limited to the Hebrew point of view and habit of mind. It is quite as true a statement, and to us much fuller of suggestion and help, when taken out of the narrower Hebrew mould and recast after a broader pattern. Not in his priestly capacity alone, but through the whole range of his character and career as Son of man and Redeemer of humanity, it is a faithful and intensely instructive account of Jesus our Lord, to say, "He is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." It would not be easy to find more fitting terms in which to set forth the secret of all that Jesus was, in his person and character, as Son of man,—of all that he did for the blessing and betterment of men, than to call it the power of an endless life. That is what made him the man that he was, spiritually supreme, morally unmatched among all other men. That is what made him the helper of his brother men, mightier than all others on earth, able to save unto the uttermost all who come to God by him.

For it is entirely in keeping with the human character and earthly mission of our Lord, as it is of any other man, to inquire as to the causes which made him what he was. In this respect the life of Jesus is open to interpretation as is any other human life. There are reasons sufficient why it was what it was. It had source and spring from

which it drew its perfect quality, which gave to all its activities their surpassing effect. Behind and beneath all that goes to make the character of Jesus the full measure of human worth, that goes to make his ministry the redeeming of our humanity, is the cause sufficient for so great a result. And one of the truest, most illuminating names by which to call it is, "the power of an endless life." For this brings the earthly life of Jesus into closest touch with our common humanity, and helps us to realize how truly and thoroughly human he was. It enables us to take the facts of our own human experience as terms in which to read and understand what manner of man he was; and then to take to ourselves for our own living and character-making the very secret that was his. He was "made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

In a book of Prof. William James on Psychology there is a most significant passage, beginning with this notable sentence, "In all ages the man whose determinations are swayed by reference to the most distant ends has been held to possess the highest intelligence." This he goes on to illustrate by a series of examples, up in an ascending scale from lowest to highest through the range of so-called civilized humanity. At the bottom he instances the tramp—for the tramp belongs to what is called civilization, if not as a product, at any rate as a by-product. The tramp lives from hour to hour; his determinations are swayed by nothing

more distant than the next place to sponge a meal, or a drink, or a shelter for the night. That is a pretty low order, not only of intelligence, but of all that goes to the making of manhood. Somewhat higher up in the scale is the bohemian, "whose engagements are from day to day." His determinations are swayed by what the day may bring forth, of adventure, of excitement, or happy chance, with little reck of to-morrow, much less of far off to-morrows, with their harvest from seed sown to-day. This still is a rather low level of manhood, as well as intelligence. Next above the bohemian Professor James ranks the bachelor,—“who builds but for a single life.” His determinations are swayed by ends which fall wholly within the limited range of the few years he can count upon living. At any rate unless he reaches forth to ends in some way more distant than what lie within the short space of his single life, neither intelligence nor manhood attain their highest in him. Above him is the father, “who acts for another generation,” whose determinations are swayed by reference to ends far forward in the lives and careers of his children after his own life shall have disappeared from the earth. The very distance away of the objects upon which he trains his energies and plans serves as a sort of measure for the height to which he rises in the scale of intelligence and worth as a man. Still higher Professor James ranks the patriot, “who thinks of a whole community and many generations”; and then, at the topmost level of all, the

philosopher and saint, "whose cares are for humanity and for eternity." It is only when a person's determinations are swayed with reference to ends that are boundless in extent, that are without limit in the distance to which they reach away from the passing moment and the present act, that he attains the summit of human intelligence, and measures up to the full stature of a man. Such, at any rate, is the verdict of an expert in modern psychology. And he cites it, too, as being the verdict of human experience through all the ages. How entirely it agrees with this description of Jesus, Son of man, in the New Testament. He is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Here is a man, among the sons of men, whose determinations were swayed always by reference to most distant ends: ends, such as the doing of God's will on earth as it is done in heaven; ends, such as the redeeming of all humanity from unrighteousness to be the children of God; ends, far off as the kingdoms of this earth become, at last, the kingdom of God. And at the same time here is a man, who, for moral grandeur, for worth and wealth of manly character, has no equal among the sons of men. If the psychologist is right in his understanding of human attainment; if what he cites as the verdict of all the ages be correct, then the man Christ Jesus is the crown of our humanity, not only in moral excellence but, also, in height of intelligence. He was made "after the power of an endless life."

That was what transfigured the life of Jesús, out of the abject into the sublime. Living within the narrowest of earthly limits, with the least possible of earthly estate or earthly circumstance, he so lived as to glorify all that belongs to our common humanity; so lived as to give the world the one perfect example of what true manhood is; so lived as to be the mightiest of all forces making for manhood in other men. How did he do it? What better answer than to say, "After the power of an endless life." While the limits were so narrow within which he lived his life upon earth, the ends with reference to which all his determinations were swayed lay far beyond any and all earthly confines. They were high as heaven is above the earth, far-reaching as eternity beyond the boundaries of time. God, his will, his kingdom, the world to come, and in it the life everlasting, these were what entered as factors into his lowly living as Son of man; these the far-away ends toward which he was always shaping his steps, by which he himself was shaped in his own perfect manhood and in the help that was laid upon him for other men. Without this, what could a life amid his humble surroundings ever have amounted to, either for quality of character or for moral influence upon the world? Other carpenters there were in Galilee who worked with the same sort of tools and material as he, whose homely workmanship was perhaps but little inferior to his. Other villagers there were in Nazareth whose lot and whose toil was of the like



sort with his. But none of them produced there any such quality and worth of character as he did, none of them stored up there, as he did, a moral energy by which the whole world was to be moved to righteousness and a higher order of humanity. The difference was that Jesus lived and worked within the narrow limits, did the common duties lying nearest him, with mind all alive to another and far greater world, with heart and will intent on ends heaven high, far-reaching as eternity itself. His determinations, within the narrow round of Nazareth village life, as well as afterward, when teaching multitudes on hill side or by lake shore, were shaped with a view to ends lying in the eternal will of God, belonging to a kingdom not of this world but of the world to come. He was made "after the power of an endless life." But for this power, what was there to the human life of Jesus to make it more memorable or mightier in moral force than that of any other plain man, situated and circumstanced as he? What he was in his own character as Son of man, the mighty movement he originated of moral uplift to the world, still widening in scope and gaining in momentum, witness together to the force in him outmeasuring both time and the earth. No store of human inheritance, nor force of human circumstance ever sufficed to produce such results. All the powers of this world together are not able to bring forth such blossoming and fruit as appear in the personal character of Jesus and his regenerating of our human life.

Only powers of the world to come are equal to that achievement. Jesus our Lord was the bright consummate flower of all moral beauty and excellence, because the springs of his life lay, not within narrow limits of time and earth, but beyond and above, in the eternities of God himself. His ministry was the redeeming of our humanity, because he dealt with human life as having to do, not with this present world alone, but with a world to come, a world whose values are measureless as the eternal years. After the power of an endless life was he made priest. After the power of an endless life was he made in all that is the measure of his stature as the perfect man, in all that qualifies him to be the Saviour of all men, who trust in and pattern after him.

But there is more to this truth than just the manifestation of it in the life and ministry of Christ. It has bearing, also, upon our lives as he calls us to be followers of him. It is "after the power of an endless life" as well that we are made his disciples. It is power in which he makes us partakers with himself as we take him for our Saviour and Master. And the effect of it upon us is like to what it was so manifestly and unmistakably with him. No sooner do we begin to be swayed in the determinations of our life by ends high as God, far distant as eternity, than it tells upon us in a higher quality of character and an increase of our moral force on other people. Not more surely is it a mark of higher human intelligence when men

are swayed in their determinations with reference to far distant ends, than it is a mark of saintliness in human character and strength of moral influence when men live their lives with a view to ends that are divine and a world that is eternal. Explain the fact as you may, it stands there, a fact not to be gainsaid, abundantly witnessed in human experience through all the ages. The man who sincerely and earnestly shapes his life with a view to eternity with God, the High and Lofty one whose name is Holy inhabiting it, and in which he is to live forever when his life on earth is ended, cannot fail to be a finer and nobler type of man, will surely wield a greater influence for good on other people, as the result of it. There is a height and fineness of quality which human character takes upon itself, there is an intensity of moral energy which it puts forth, when it is shaped with a view to ends lying in the eternal world. This is "the power of an endless life" for the making of manhood here, in this present world.

But what if there be no world to come, after life's fitful fever has burned itself out? What if all our hope of living on, through an eternal future, be such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep? Even then it is still the fact, that men are better men, live nobler, finer human lives here, in this world, as the result of reckoning upon the world to come. It is still the fact that the intensest moral energy and the mightiest influence for helping humanity onward

and upward have proceeded from lives inspired and dominated by devoutest expectation of living on through the eternal years. What better witness could there be that such devoutest expectations are not misplaced? When some plant or tree grows best in a certain soil and climate, when there it reaches its most abundant blossoming and its richest fruitage, there is no hesitation in concluding that there is where the plant or tree belongs. So when our humanity develops its finest, blossoms most beautifully and yields its choicest fruit, in the soil of sonship with the eternal God, in the climate of highest hope for the eternal life, shall there be hesitation in concluding that such is the very soil and climate in which this plant belongs? So it is that Jesus, Son of man, interprets to us our human life. So it is that he redeems and commands it for us. He deals with it as having eternity set at the heart of it, as requiring eternity to give scope and stimulus and nutriment sufficient to bring it to anything like its best. As he himself was made a priest, was for us made a prince and Saviour "after the power of an endless life," so is his making of us as his disciples after the same power and process. It means that we, like him, in order to realize our fullest humanity, in order to take on our finest character and be of the greatest good, must be swayed in our determinations by reference to ends which lie in the eternal years of God and of the life to come. Much stress is laid, in our time, on doing the duty that lies nearest one, meeting each

day as it comes, with its demands and opportunities. And it is not easy to over urge the importance of so doing. But, as matter of fact, the duty lying nearest is never done the best it can be without regard for far distant ends, toward which it is a step. To-day's demands and opportunities are never squarely and fully met without some vision of to-morrow's opening out in long vista from them. "Man is made so," said Phillips Brooks, "that this sense is necessary to the most vigorous and best life always. Let me feel that nothing but this moment depends on this moment's action, and I am very apt to let this moment act as it will. Let me see the spirits of the moments yet unborn standing and watching it anxiously, and I must watch it also for their sakes." If, then, we are but aware that the eternal years wait for us, filled with an infinite Father's thought and love toward us, must it not make us watchful of every step by which we move on toward it? Must it not enable us to do our very best with the duty lying nearest? Is there not in it the very power that can make the most and best of us, even as the Son of man himself was made all that he came on earth to be and do, "after the power of an endless life."

## BASKETS FULL OF FRAGMENTS.

*When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, twelve. And when the seven among the four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they say, seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?—Mark 8 : 19-21.*

It is one of the few points at which our Lord seems almost to have lost patience with the twelve disciples. They were so slow to learn, their memories were so short! At least they failed to remember the one most memorable thing in what they had witnessed of the ministry their Lord had been doing. They could recall the exact number of baskets filled for them each time they had attended and assisted their Master, when he multiplied bread for feeding the hungry. But what was most vital of all about it had soon slipped their minds, if indeed they had laid hold upon it with anything like a right understanding. The real meaning for them of living, day after day, in the presence and with the ministry of one who could do such mighty works, was what they were missing. This is the lesson which they were so slow to learn. When some new situation arose with its questions and problems, they failed to carry over with them for

light upon it, what they had witnessed of Jesus living and working among them. They did not seem to be aware that in companying with one who had so easily showed himself master of the situation, with thousands of hungry people about him, in a desert place, they carried with them the master key for every new situation of life into which they should enter. That they did not understand this, how they could possibly help understanding it, was strange to him who had been doing so much to impress it upon them. This was what put his patience with them under so severe a strain. And may not these questions of Jesus about it serve well to bring home to us, with double force, the very truth which the twelve seemed so strangely, almost hopelessly, slow to apprehend. "He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"

It is Christ's message to us, touching our remembrance of what the past has enabled us to witness of divine help and blessing, in our lives. That there are such chapters to recall in every one of our lives may safely be taken for granted. Some-

where behind us has there not been the desert place of life, with its extremity of need and distress, into which the divine help has come, as it were a hand outstretched, multiplying bread for our hunger? With most of us has not such miracle of the loaves been witnessed again and again? Is there not more than one such timely ministry which we have occasion to remember? If in one desert place there have been twelve baskets full for us to take up from the divine mercy exercised toward us, have there not also at some other place been seven? Cast your eye back along the pathway of life over which you have come. If at every turn of it, where there was occasion for you to say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me," you have, like Samuel, set up a stone to mark it, are there not some of them still plainly in sight? It is a message from these for our present life which Christ brings us in the words of our text. What is our remembrance of the divine help as we have witnessed it in the time past of our life? What is to be our understanding about it? Clearly there are two ways in which we may remember it. Clearly there is a fullness of meaning to it which we are liable to miss. There was a way in which the disciples remembered, with not a little exactness, what they had witnessed of divine help at the hand of Jesus their Lord those two times in the desert. The precise number of loaves, of the thousands fed, of the baskets full of fragments which they themselves took up, in each case they could distinctly recall.



Each scene, no doubt, remained sharply and separately outlined in their minds. For that matter, just there was the fault in their remembrance. Each occasion of the divine help they had witnessed they kept as a memory by itself. What they forgot, or overlooked, was the great constant fact of the divine helpfulness in Christ Jesus their Lord, connecting between these two marked instances of it, following after, as it had also preceded them. Their remembrance was rather of help from the Lord here and there than of the Lord as the helper whom they had continually with them. It was somewhat as if the traveler should remember only those points in his journey where he stopped for his meals, without thought of the highway, with its levels and grades, which had been a continuous help to his journey. Or, it was as if one were to remember only the broad, smooth millponds on some mighty river, and forget the continuous flow of the stream which connects them, which was before any one of them, and follows on after it again. To recall some instance in the past of the divine help toward us, as if it were a thing by itself, as if it were a sort of pool in the desert, without inlet or outlet, is one way of doing. But to remember it as some broad Ontario into which, from above, a mighty Niagara is pouring its flood, and from which follows on a great river St. Lawrence, flowing to the sea, is quite another thing. This was the way in which Jesus wanted his disciples to keep in mind his own mighty works of help,

for them and for others. That they were so slow to do it was no small disappointment to him. How could they witness such instances of his help without learning of him as their continual Helper? How was it they did not understand that the presence with them of Him whose help, again and again had proved so divine and so timely, was a continuous stream of divine helpfulness, going on with them into each new situation of their life? After what they had thus repeatedly witnessed of help from their Master, even in desert places, could they not be confident of a helper always at hand, so long as they companied with him? It seems to us that they very easily might.

Then why is it that we are so apt to recall the occasions of God's helping us in the past after this same strange and short-sighted way? As memory calls up to us some desert place in our life, where we were almost ready to faint with the distress and the weariness of it, and relief came, as by the divine hand extended to us, how apt we are to keep it in remembrance as a thing by itself. And when a second time, or a third, the like experience comes to us, with more or less difference of detail, again it is likely to have a place in our memory apart by itself. But how far short this comes from being the full remembrance of our help from God in the past. It is remembering simply the fragments of God's mercy to us, while forgetting it in its wholeness. It is giving heed to the things here and there which the stream has cast up on its

banks and taking no notice of the stream itself, in unceasing, unfailing flow. And so when some new situation arises, in which the divine help is especially needed, it is regret and repining which come from this kind of remembrance, rather than hope and good cheer. It was so with the people of Israel, when they said: "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold he smote the rock, that the water gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?" They remembered the help which God had given them in the past, but in such a way as to be unmindful of God as the ever-present helper, when the new crisis of need was upon them. God's mercy toward them was a memory in the past, and not a fact in the present. They looked back to it with a sigh of regret rather than with a sense of relief. They were neither the braver nor the abler for meeting the new problems of their life, from recalling how God's hand had formerly figured in solving their problems. They looked back upon their past deliverances without seeing in them any earnest of deliverance to be. Hitherto the Lord had helped them, but they remembered it so much as a thing by itself that it did not make their present case seem any the less helpless. And how apt we all are to recall God's help of us in the past after that same short-sighted way. How often, in the face of new needs, new difficulties, new distresses, we look back with regret to times in the past when by God's help we were delivered

out of great need, difficulty, distress. If only we could be back there, where the rock was smitten for us in the desert, or the five loaves were broken among the five thousand; but in this new desert place to which we have come, what help is there for us? Then, there were baskets full of fragments for us to take up from the divine mercy and ministry to us. Now, we have no bread with us at all. What does it mean? Simply that in recalling past mercies and deliverances of God in any such way we do not really remember. It is only the fragments of which we are mindful. The divine helpfulness for us as a great continuous fact of our life we are not keeping in mind. We do not yet understand what past mercies and deliverances mean in relation to present problems and needs. The rock smitten in the wilderness, the five loaves broken among five thousand in the desert place, are memorable not each by itself. Each was witness to a divine helper, ever present and all-sufficient for every new time that should come. That rock in the wilderness, says the Christian Apostle, was spiritual in its ministry to Israel, and as such it did not remain at a particular point of their journey, but followed them, for their drinking of it anew at every new stage of their march. And so when Jesus, in the desert place, broke the loaves among the thousands, and baskets full of the fragments were taken up, it was the manifesting of himself to men as the Bread of Life, as Divine Helper, Deliverer, Saviour, always at hand, with abounding supply

for every new human need, with the fullest solution of every new problem of life. What were twelve baskets full of broken bread to remember alongside the continuous, abounding divine helpfulness of him who had broken the loaves among the thousands! They were memorable only as serving to keep that in continual remembrance. And so it is of those times past in our lives, when in some signal way help, deliverance, blessing came to us from our God. They are memorable, not so much for the pleasure of looking back upon them as for the joy of understanding that the same Divine Helper who gave us the deliverance and the blessing then attends us in each new situation, is equally at hand to deliver and to bless us in our present difficulty, in our newest need. That rock smitten for us back there in the desert is for us to remember, rather as the spiritual Rock which follows us than as a merely monumental spot. Those baskets full of fragments, which once or twice we took up from the divine ministry in the desert place, are to be cherished in our memories for what they tell us of the divine hand which broke them, ready and mighty with help and blessing for us in our present case. It is so that Paul remembered the help he had obtained of God in the times past of his life. Once in Asia, he tells us, such trouble came to him that he was pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life. But God delivered him from so great a death. And when he writes of it he looks upon it not as something

belonging solely to the past. It is pledge to him in the present, and confidence for the time to come. "God who hath delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us" is the way he remembered it. And it is such remembrance of his mighty and merciful working among them that Christ seeks from all his disciples. It is so that he would have us understand all of the deliverance, the help and the blessing witnessed in the past of our lives. Is there a time to which you can look back and say, the Lord saved me there from my sin with a great salvation? What then? Do you not understand that the same Lord is at hand to save you to the uttermost from the sin which is besetting you to-day? Can you recall any time when, by God's help, you withstood and overcame great temptation? Then remember that the like victory is open to you over whatever temptation may be assailing you now. Does the past hold for us chapters of trial, sorrow, suffering through which we were led by the hand "divinely gentle and divinely strong"? Shall it not then be the understanding with us in each new chapter of trial, sorrow, suffering which may come that the same divinely strong and gentle hand is outstretching to us? With David the remembrance that the Lord had delivered him out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, was both courage and strength for facing his giant foe. So is it well for us all to take both strength and courage with us into each new struggle of our life, being mindful

of the times when God has helped us hitherto. Are we faint of heart, it must be because we do not well remember, because we do not understand. To adapt, somewhat, the words of another, "If we stand in front of the new temptation or the new pain and tremble, just as if we had never seen a temptation or a pain before, what does it mean? It must mean that out of the old mercy we have not gathered God. We may have come out of it with thankfulness for release; but we have not brought out of it a deep and abiding fellowship with Christ, a firm and immovable confidence that we are his and he is ours, to take with us into the new need which we have reached." "To gather God" from his past helping of us is a fine way of putting it. It is so that we can make sure of him as our ever-present Helper as new occasions come. This is the remembrance, this the understanding for which our Lord appealed.

And it is an appeal to the church, as well as to individual disciples. This is so well said in another's words that I make free to use them. "The Christian church lives through one period in her career; she conquers the enemies that meet her there; she keeps herself alive and feeds her children. Then she passes on into another period with its new needs, its calls for other methods and miracles, and always there is a spirit in the church which trembles and has not learned, from the way in which God has cared for his church in the past, that he, the same God, is able to take care of her in the future

also. He answered the sceptics of the old centuries, but can he answer the subtler, finer sceptics of to-day? He overcame the worldliness of the eighteenth century, but can he conquer the materialism of the nineteenth? He saved his church when she was persecuted with rack and fire, can he save her also when she is tempted with the corruptions of prosperity and fashion? These are the questions one hears," this writer says. What answer to them so complete as this word of Jesus to the twelve: "When I broke the loaves among the thousands, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? How is it that ye do not understand?" Deliverances of his church in the past are so many pledges that through all time Christ lives in the church as his body upon earth. It is so, thus far that he has kept his word: "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And shall not this be our remembrance and understanding of it for church needs and problems of the present day? Baskets full of fragments have been gathered in the past, because our Lord himself was there to break the bread. And still is he the Bread of life, unailing to-day as in any former time. He is the smitten Rock which follows on for the refreshing of age after age, which follows us to make each new chapter of our life fresh with his ministries of saving, of blessing, of fulfilling unto us our life.



## THE IMPERISHABLE WORDS OF CHRIST.

*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*—Matt. 24 : 35.

A bold statement for anyone to make; fairly extravagant it must have sounded, when first it was spoken. To prophesy is always venturesome. Never more so than in undertaking to tell beforehand with any certainty what words are to be enduring. Select, from the literature of any age, writings that are sure to be immortal! In nothing have the best of critics gone wider of the mark than in their attempt to do that. Books at whose appearing it has been confidently said, they belong among the classics, they will surely live, in a surprisingly short space of time have had their day and been shelved forever. While others for which no one at first would venture to predict a future, have persisted from age to age and proved themselves imperishable. The people of Shakespeare's day seem to have had little idea that what he was writing for the London stage would live on and surpass all else in English letters. And how many a writer, whose admirers at the flood tide of his popularity have predicted for him a place beside Shakespeare among the immortals, has gone down into utter forgetfulness. Rash man, among all the

multitude whose "making of books is without end," who should say: My words shall never pass away! But the man who said these words, as recorded in our text, was one who never put pen to paper, who committed no word of his to writing of any kind, so far as can be known. The only writing of his, so much as mentioned, was with his finger on the ground. But the words he wrote, are not preserved, if in fact he did write at all, for the account of it is not found at all in the oldest copies of the Gospel by John. So, practically, we are without information of any word that our Lord ever put into writing. And yet it is he who had the boldness to say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." How very unlikely a saying! Had it been some old time king of Egypt, when his huge obelisk of granite was quarried out, chiseled all over with picture writing, and set up in a rainless climate who had said "My words shall not pass away," it might have seemed not impossible. Even then the time might come, as it did, when no one any longer knew what his picture words meant, when for century after century they had passed away into mere hieroglyphics, another name for unreadable cipher. Had it been some Grecian sage or Roman lawgiver, who said, "My words shall never pass away," when he saw them chiseled in marble or tableted in brass, it would not have seemed so strange. But he who said it was an unlettered Galilean, going about from place to place, speaking now to crowds of people in

village synagogue, or the open air, and again to individuals or to little groups in private places; without taking any pains, without seeming to have a care that what he was saying should be preserved. Among the twelve who attended him as he taught and preached, there was no shorthand reporter to take down his words, that he might review them afterwards and see that he had said exactly what he meant. No discourse of his did he ever write out, either before or after it was given, that some person not able to hear it might have it to read over. Neither abstract nor extract of his own sayings did he ever put in writing, that they might be filed away and kept for future reference. All of that, Jesus, the Great Teacher, left for others than himself to do. He gave his Gospel to the world wholly in the spoken word, and in actions whose speaking is louder than words. He scattered his message broadcast. He committed it to the winds, as it were. He trusted it to make its own record, to write itself out in such form as would outlast any alphabet, be more enduring than parchment, than slabs of stone and plates of brass. Was it not a strange way to do? Stranger still is the fact that the very thing he foretold is precisely what came to pass. His words, spoken those centuries ago, in synagogue, on hillside and house-top; flung out to the ears of people too dull to understand much of them, people too gross to have any great sympathy with them, have not passed away, but are enduring still, as true to-

day, as full of meaning and of power to-day, as when they first fell from his lips, by the blue Lake of Galilee, in crowded temple porch or along the shaded garden walks of Olivet. And what else remains of all the world as it was when Jesus lived and taught? The earth of that time has certainly passed away. Its governments, its languages, its very geography is gone. The two things in all that earth which seemed sure to last were Roman power and Grecian culture. But among great earth powers to-day how feeble, how second-rate the Italian kingdom with its capital on the same spot where Caesar's stood. Then it was the Roman going everywhere to give the law and take the tribute. To-day it is the Italian going everywhere to do the digging and the hand-organ grinding. Then it was the schoolmasters of every land who came from Greece. Now it is men from Greece who push fruit carts through the streets and cry bananas! Sure enough, the earth has passed away since Jesus sat upon the mount of Olives and told his disciples of things to come. And not the earth only, but heaven as well has passed away. The astronomy of that time has gone along with its geography. The sky overhead,—everyone looked upon it then as a sort of revolving roof above the earth. Sun, moon and stars were made account of, as so many splendid conveniences for this world in which man has his life. There was little thought of any other use for the heavenly bodies, except to make their round of attendance upon the earth and its life.

The whole heaven was reckoned upon as centering here. But that heaven has long ago passed away. It is quite a different heaven for us as we look up at the sky. Heavenly bodies are worlds themselves, not mere adjuncts to ours. We look up to the heavens, not as if against a vast over-arching canopy, but just into endless depths of space, with numberless other and far greater worlds. The service which sun and stars give to our little earth is but an incident to other ends they fulfill.

Then there is another sense in which the heaven of nineteen centuries ago has passed away. To all peoples then, except a very small remnant of Jews, heaven was the home of gods many, of divinities diverse as nature itself. With the Greek and Roman it was Olympus, with its gods and goddesses, loving, hating, intriguing, quarreling, like lords and beauties in some monarch's court. With our own Norse ancestors, heaven was Valhalla, with its brawny deities and their boisterous feasting. With the red men, whose home this land of ours was, heaven was the happy hunting ground. All those heavens have passed away. Others like them still remain among the peoples of far eastern and southern lands. But there too they are beginning to pass away. Our own century has witnessed the passing of that kind of heaven from multitudes in Japan, China, India, and even in Darkest Africa; and there are Islands of the Pacific, by the hundreds, from which it has passed away within the memory of many living. And

in every instance, the occasion of its passing, the agency, the very cause of it has been what? The words of Jesus, Son of man, spoken so long ago, within such brief space both of time and territory, flung out upon dull ears and slow hearts of men, without pains by the speaker himself to gather them up and put them into writing. Out through the Roman empire went those words of Jesus, in the graceful widely spoken Greek, the stately Latin, and many other ruder tongues. And it was not long before Olympus with its gods and goddesses was passing from the thoughts of men, as the stars fade when the sunrise comes, and its place was taken by the new heaven of "My Father's house" with many mansions. On went those words of the Galilean, westward, northward, among the Gauls, the Britons, the Teuton tribes, and ere long, everywhere, it was the twilight of the gods. The night stars disappeared with the shining of the sun. The heaven of Valhalla passed away for "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Across the seas, those words of Jesus journeyed with discoverer and pilgrim, and now over well-nigh all this great continent of ours, the heaven of happy hunting grounds has passed away; and there is the new heaven, with great white throne, and sea of glass and white robes which are the righteousness of saints. How came it to be so?

A single word of Christ's carries in itself the secret of so great a change. It is the word Father. By giving the world that name, in which to gather up

and unify all its thoughts of the divine, Jesus of Nazareth set the power at work for rolling up as a scroll the heavens which were of old, and opening the new heaven to view. And with that passing away of heaven, the earth also could not but pass away. For inseparable from the fatherhood of God is the brotherhood of man. When once our eyes have looked up into heaven and beheld there, enthroned over all in holiness and love, our Father-God, in turning them once more upon the earth, what shall we surely see? Must it not be that we shall recognize in all humanity our brother man? To take that one word of Jesus as our name for God, how vast the change it makes for us with everything, both in heaven and upon the earth! There, at least, is one word of Christ's which, we may be sure, will never pass away. What possibility that a time will ever come, when some one will give the world a truer, higher, better name to call God by than this word Father. Does any one presume to think that he may some time and some where hit upon a superior, a diviner name? Let the sages of every land, let the thinkers, scholars, the men of all sorts of genius get together in one grand world's convocation, to agree upon the name for God that shall mean the most and be to them most richly satisfying, and should their choice be any other word than this which Jesus gave, it would be something vastly less. God is the Father, God is love. Whatever else may pass away, of all that enters into the thought and speech of man, those

are words which shall never pass away. Whatever light may still break forth from those words upon our human life, and doubtless there will be much, there is no light which ever can break forth with brightness beyond what is in them. So far as a name for God is concerned, Jesus spoke the last word that ever will be spoken: the word that shall not pass away, for there is no word beside it which would not be something less divine. And in like manner is it with other words he spoke. His names for our humanity, son, brother, are words which shall not pass away. His words as to sin, the loss, the waste, the foulness of it, his word of forgiveness, his word of righteousness, his word which fills out the bare idea of immortality with the fullness of eternal life,—all these are words which shall not pass away.

And the reason of it is not far to seek. It is already more than hinted at. The words of our Lord are imperishable, because of the reality in them greater and fuller than in any other words. Jesus himself expressed this in a single sentence: "The words I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life." He spake as never man spake, because in all his speaking he himself was the Word. His utterance was in all things self utterance. The reality of what he gave voice to was in his own life and person as the Son of man. It was so he answered, when people came to him saying, "Who art thou?" "Even the very thing which I have been speaking to you from the beginning."



There was an entire oneness of all that Jesus said with what he was, with what actually lived and abounded in him. It is hard for us to do more than repeat his statement of it, for so much of our speaking is of a different sort. With us, so commonly, there is little of ourselves in the words we use. At best we speak that we do know, or what we feel. At some rarest moment, perhaps, we do put into our words the very life we are living. That rare thing was what Christ did in all his speaking. So he could say,—“My words are spirit, my words are life.” What I say is one and the same with what I am. Hence were his words imperishable: so shall they not pass away, though the earth be removed and the heavens vanish like smoke.

And another reason why the words of Christ are imperishable agrees well with this. It is emphasized by the very fact that he did not commit his words to writing. He did better than that. He committed them to the faith and love of men and women made alive by them. He wrote them on the living tablets of human hearts. Words written on tables of stone, though they be words of God and graven by the very finger of God, might perish, as when Moses, in hot anger at sight of the golden calf, cast them from his hands and broke them beneath the mount. Words written on parchment with indelible ink may become a dead language, though the truth they speak be divine. But words which themselves are spirit and life, when tran-

scribed into acts of faith and love, into character that is true and holy, cannot pass away. Nothing else in all this world, nothing else in all the eternities is so enduring. Such are the words of Jesus, as he speaks to men, himself the very Word of God made flesh. He and he only has the words which for us to hear and heed, to believe and keep is everlasting life.

This then is what it belongs to us to do with words which have not passed away, but speak still as directly and forcibly to us as to those who first heard them in synagogue or temple, by lake shore or on mountain side: to take them to ourselves, so that they may make record of their truth once more in us, may write themselves out anew in the Christly quality and spirit of our deeds and character. Some who first heard them turned from them offended and protesting: "These are hard sayings, who can hear them." Others welcomed them, saying, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." So let us not pass them by, but lay hold upon them with fullest trust in him who speaks them. Would you have the life you live an enduring, an eternal life. Give all heed to the words of him who so speaks to you. Continue in them. Let them be in you and abound and they will give proof anew that they are imperishable by making the life that you live according to them as eternal, as undying as are they themselves.

## THE WORD OF THE LORD IN THE POTTER'S HOUSE.

*Then went I down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.—*  
Jer. 18 : 3, 4.

Object teaching, then, in these days of normal classes and kindergartens, is no new thing under the sun. It is a very old method of teaching. The scriptures abound with it. The Great Teacher of all was the greatest among object teachers. "Without a parable spake he not unto them." Another master in the art of it was Jeremiah, the prophet. His call to be a prophet was the double object lesson of an almond rod and a seething cauldron. Repeatedly his messages from the Lord to the people of his time were according to this method. One time it was a girdle he was bidden take and wear awhile and then hide in a hole of the rock till it was spoiled, to teach Judah how good for nothing it would become, unless it should cleave to God as a girdle to the loins of a man. Again it was an earthen bottle, which he carried into the valley of Tophet and there broke, in the sight of the men who went with him, to let them see how

God would break their city, beyond possibility of mending "because they have hardened their necks." Then there was the object lesson of two baskets of figs, the good and the bad; of bonds and yokes which the prophet wore on his neck; of his redeeming, by purchase, his kinsman's field; of the stones which he hid in Pharaoh's brick-kilns; of the stone which was bound to the book of his prophecies, to sink it in the river Euphrates.

Rich in object teaching, almost dramatic in parts, from the boldness of it, is the book of Jeremiah the prophet. Perhaps the finest instance of them all is this passage of our text. Here is the account of it, largely in his own graphic words. "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then went I down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord." Let us go in the prophet's company this morning to the potter's house and see if God will not there cause us to hear his word, in the word which he caused Jeremiah to hear.

To begin with, there is this word from the Lord in the potter's house as we watch him at work

with his wheels. God has a design in each one of our lives, which he is seeking by all means to work out. Observe how the potter goes at his work. He takes a lump of clay, already mixed and kneaded with exceeding care, and lays it upon the flat surface of the upper wheel. Then with his feet on the under wheel he sets it revolving. Next he puts his thumb in the center of the clay and begins hollowing it out. After a little, with one hand pressing on the outside and the other from within, he shapes it into a smooth cylindrical wall. "Thus," to borrow a technologist's words, "by humoring the clay, elongating the vessel, again depressing it, widening it, and by continued manipulation in this manner, the most exquisite shapes are produced." But there is something which goes before all this, with each piece of work in the hands of the potter. It is the design in the potter's mind, as to what the vessel is to be when it is made. The whole process is determined by that, the amount of clay he puts on his wheel at any one time, every touch of his hands in manipulating the mass. Would a potter put clay on his wheel, set it revolving, lay his hands to it, without any idea of the sort of vessel to result? Not if he be in earnest; not if he be at all workmanlike. The form and capacity of the vessel when it shall be done, are clearly in his mind to begin with. Whether it is to be a jar, holding so much, with the smallest possible dimensions, or a vase, having the utmost of strength with most shapely and graceful pro-

portions, all that is decided when the clay is first placed on the wheel. Corresponding to the clay in his hand is the design in his mind. With a view to that he sets it whirling on his wheel. With a view to that is every touch and pressure of his hand on the clay.

And here does not the word of the Lord begin to come to us in the potter's house, as it did to the prophet of old? "Behold, as clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, saith the Lord." A picture for each one of us, of what his own life is in the hands of God, is that lump of clay, upon which we see the potter working with so much pains and skill. Corresponding to it is the design for each one of us which God, also, has in mind. We say very commonly of our human life, that it is in the hands of God. What do we mean by it? Simply that we are subject to a power that is mightier than ourselves? Then it is a very shallow saying. As the prophet teaches it to us, in the potter's house, it is far greater truth than that. It means that we are in God's hands, with a view to what God has in mind to do with us and make of us. That is the providence of God in any true sense of the phrase,—his having in view a purpose already settled upon, toward which he works. The potter's providence is the touch and pressure of his hands upon the clay with a view to the vessel he purposes to make. And so of God's Providence, the touch and pressure of his divine hand upon our humanity, with a view to what the divine mind is intending

to make of our humanity. Corresponding to every human life which God sets revolving on the wheel of time, is a design in his eternal mind, upon which he bends his infinite power and skill that he may work out and realize. Just this is the witness of scripture throughout to our human life. The Son of man himself certified and confirmed it, without fear of exaggeration, when he said, "But even the hairs of your head are all numbered." It was the fact of his own life of which he was always aware, to which he often appealed. As early as his twelfth year, life for him meant the purpose and arrangement of his Father in heaven. For a particular end he was born, he told Pilate; for a particular cause he had come into the world. A favorite word with him in speaking of his life upon earth was "fulfillment." In all the events and experience of it human life for him was the realizing of a great divine idea and intent, for which he had come into the world. Even to lay down his life on the cross meant, "It is finished." God's great design in his life was thereby fully wrought out. What witness could be so conclusive as this that God has his design in and for every human life, toward which he is working in all his dealings with it. The one perfect human life ever seen in the world was the entire realization of all that God intended it to be.

Another witness to it, however, there is, of a far different kind, in the history of Israel as a people. Back at the first, when he called Abraham to leave

home and kindred for a land to be showed him, the design of it stands in the foreground. More sharply is it outlined when he called the tribes out of Egypt to enter and possess a land of their own. "Ye shall be unto me an holy nation." To make of them a nation in which self government should be realized through direct fealty and obedience to God, was the divine design in Israel's life. With a view to this he gave them his law, raised up judges, sent prophets among them. In furtherance of it he wrought manifold works, both of deliverance and judgment upon them. How large a part of the Old Testament is simply the oft-repeated reminder to Israel of God's purpose in their life as a people. And it is one point of many in which the history of Israel is a picture of God's dealings with individual men. As in Israel's peculiar national life there was a purpose of God, so is there a divine purpose in what is peculiar, what is individual in the life of each one of us. As God's dealings with Israel were by way of working out his divine plan in their life, so do his dealings with us have in view what he is purposing for each of us in person. To each of us, personally, as to the house of Israel, this is God's word, "As the clay is in the hands of the potter, so are ye in my hands, saith the Lord." Not in a mere passive way, but in the way of his own working out in us, with us, through us a perfect design of his own.

This is the first lesson of all in the potter's house. And how needful, how vital for every one of us



to learn it. Here we are in this world with these lives of ours, no two of them alike, each having its individuality, as has each person's face. Not by any accident is it so. It is by divine intent. Corresponding to each one of them is the design which God has in mind. Each one of our lives is set in its own peculiar way upon the revolving years, is touched in its peculiar way by the fingers of providence, because, to adapt somewhat another's words, it has a complete and perfect plan cherished for it in the heart of God,—a divine biography marked out for it to fulfill. Each person's life, your life, my life is designed to be a complete and beautiful whole, an experience led on by God, a drama of perfect art, with no part wanting, a divine study for the man himself and for others. What a thought is this for every human soul to cherish. What dignity does it add to human life. We live in the divine thought. We fill a place in the everlasting plan of God's intelligence. We never sink below his care; we never drop out of his counsel. "As the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are ye in mine hand, saith the Lord."

But the word of the Lord by his prophet in the potter's house goes farther than this. It tells us also what God's design is in each human life, even to make the most of it and the best that it is capable of. So it certainly is that the potter works with each piece of the clay that he puts on his wheel. He proposes to make the most of his clay. He handles it so as to get from it the best shape and

quality of a vessel of which it admits. The very material he works with is warrant that he will work it for all it is worth. Potter's clay is no common earth that can be dug up anywhere. The best of it is made of rare ingredients carefully prepared and mingled together. So valuable is the clay for the choicer makes of pottery that the composition is a secret from all but the makers. Visit the potteries at Sevres, just outside of Paris. They will let you see how that world-renowned ware is wrought on the wheels. But don't expect they will admit you to the mixing room and tell you the secret of the clay. With clay so rare and precious as that on his wheel do you suppose the potter intends to make of it anything cheap or rude or poor? From the very fineness of his material you know that it is a vessel of exquisite shape and surpassing quality that he had in mind. The potter's design corresponds to what his clay is capable of. Again does not the word of the Lord come to us in the potter's house? "As the clay is in hand of the potter so are ye in mine hand, saith the Lord." See what clay this is that God has on the wheel of his providence in every human life. Beside all else in his whole universe, what precious material is this. What ingredients are in it, what union of the best in nature with what is altogether above mere nature. What mysterious mingling of the spiritual with the physical is this human being of ours. Who but the maker of it knows anything like the whole secret of it. What capabilities

belong to it; what enlargement it admits of, what refinement, what enrichment. Can it be anything mean or poor that God means to make when he works with such material as that? Too precious in the sight of God, too capable of all that is most pleasing to God is the humanity in each of us, to allow of that. The most, the best of which each one of us is capable, that is God's design for us all. With a view to that are all his dealings with us. It is a plan so great that as yet we can know it only in part. But the outline of it, at least, is clear, when he calls us to be his children in Jesus Christ. Sonship with God; is not that just another name for the most and best that any human life is capable of? That is the pattern after which the Divine Artificer is doing his divine utmost to shape each of us. With a view to this we are in his hands as clay in the hand of the potter.

Beyond this, still, speaks the word of the Lord in the potter's house. It was what the prophet was bidden especially to note. As he wrought upon the wheels, while Jeremiah watched, the potter did not make the vessel which he first designed. From some cause his plan was thwarted. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. What then? Did he give it up? Did he throw it away as so much waste? Not so! He modified his design and went on to make of it the next best thing. So he made it again, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then came the word of the Lord,

saying, "O House of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord." God has his design in each human life. God's design for each human life is to make of it the most and best it is capable of. But what if, from any cause, the work gets marred in his hands? Cannot he do as did the potter? Cannot he do as any good workman does when he works with precious material? If something arises to mar his original design he does not waste it. He makes of it the next best thing. Shall not God be equally workmanlike with these human lives of ours as he has them in hand? And here the teaching goes by contrast as well as resemblance. How the vessel was marred in the potter's hand, the prophet does not say; perhaps by carelessness; more likely by defect in the clay. But human lives get marred in God's hands only from a single cause. One ingredient of them is different from any in potter's clay. It is their power of choice, either for God's plan or against it. It is possible for every one of us, by willfulness, to mar his own life in the very hands of God. Our self-will, the wrong we do, interfere with God's design for our life and make us so much the less capable of the most and best he is seeking to make of us. Only thus is the vessel ever marred in God's hands, as he works with the clay of our human life. But how much of such marring there is. How many a life has this chapter in its biography, "And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter." What can God do with such

marred human lives? Shall he cast them off from his wheel as so much waste material? No; he can do with them as the potter. "So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." If by willfulness we spoil God's first design in our life, then he will modify it and go on making of us the next best thing. The very best that we will allow him to do for us and with us, he will by no means fail to do. Only as we make ourselves incapable of it does he ever scale down his design.

So long as there is any possibility of good and worth in our lives, God is working upon us to save and to realize it for us. And then, to quote Dr. Bushnell's forcible words: "When he cannot use us any more for our own good, he will use us for the good of others,—an example of the misery and horrible desperation to which any soul must come when all the good ends, and all the holy callings of God's friendly and fatherly purpose are exhausted. Or it may be that now, remitting all other plans and purposes in our behalf, he will thenceforth use us, wholly against our will, to be the demonstration of his justice and avenging power before the eyes of mankind, saying over us as he did over Pharaoh in the day of his judgment; "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, that my name might be declared throughout the earth." Doubtless he had other and more genial plans for this bad man, if only he could have accepted such;

but upon his repeated rejection of these, God turned his mighty counsels on him wholly on the use to be made of him as a reprobate. How many Pharaohs in our common life refuse every other use that God will make of them, choosing only to figure in their small way as reprobates."

How clearly it was thus with the House of Israel is part of the object-teaching before us. How many times the goodly vessel God sought to make of that people was marred in his hand. What did he do? Give them up? Cast away his people? The very farthest from that. He made it again another vessel, as seemed good to him. At the outset, as he began at Sinai to mould its life as a nation, the vessel was marred in his hand. So he made it again another vessel by forty years in the desert. Once fairly settled in a land of their own, the vessel was marred again in his hand and he made it again another vessel by giving them a king. In the days of Solomon it began to seem as if the vessel was nearing its perfect proportions, when suddenly again it was marred in his hand. But he kept on making it another vessel, as seemed good to him. Again it was marred and again he made from the very remnant of it another vessel, by the seventy years of captivity. At last, in the fullness of the times, when he sent forth his Son, born an Israelite, it was marred again by its refusal of him. Again he made it another vessel, but this time a vessel of wrath, fitted to destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the

vessels of mercy. "O House of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord." How thoroughly he did it, is told in that saddest of all sentences, spoken by our Lord with tears in his voice as well as upon his face: "How often would I have gathered you but ye would not." And it is a word of the Lord which still speaks, speaks directly to each one of us. Has any one marred his own life, so that but a remnant, only a fraction of it is left? Let him commit that to God, to his will and working, and he will make the very best out of it, that is still possible to it, that still it is capable of. Is life yet fresh with you, as yet marred but little? Enter at once into God's purpose for you. Take his plan of life for your own, and work with him for making the best and the most of yourself. Don't mar your life any more in his hand. Don't make it needful for him to make you over, after any smaller or cheaper pattern. As clay in the hand of the potter, be responsive to his every movement and touch. And God's design in your life will at length be fulfilled. He will make you a vessel unto honor, a vessel of mercy, rare and resplendent with his own beauty of holiness, his own eternal and ineffable glory. "Cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord."

## CREDIBILITY OF THE RESURRECTION.

*Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?*—Acts 26 : 8.

It is the very heart of the matter to which we are taken by this question of Paul to Agrippa. Belief in the resurrection is apt to seem to us an especially difficult thing; it is so contrary to the common experience of men. What we see and know of this world seems to be all entirely against it. And what is there to give us reasonable and tenable ground for such belief? Instances enough there have been and are of persons apparently dead who have come back to life. But their very return to life is what makes it conclusive that they did not actually die. Alleged reappearances of the dead, in some strange bodily form, have been plenty enough. But so little will they bear anything like open and rigid investigation, so largely are they traceable to illusion and humbug, that as yet they have very small claim to be credible. Everywhere it has been a part of the superstition about ghosts, that they vanish with the cock-crowing and dawn of the day. So vanishes the great mass of so-called spirit manifestation, when the light is turned upon it, when it is brought out into the open daylight of thorough research. "The undiscovered



country from whose bourne no traveler returns" continues to describe what death is to the common, not to say universal, observation of men. Not since New Testament times has there been a credible exception of which we know. And for this very reason we find it hard to give credit to the few cases of the dead brought to life which appear in the New Testament record. For they are very few. And they all connect very closely with the ministry of Jesus and his two chief apostles. If these were due to the fondness of New Testament writers for multiplying marvels, then at least we must credit them with exercising remarkable reserve. With the whole field open for imagination and invention, they were so sparing about it as to attribute to Jesus only three instances of raising the dead and one each to Peter and Paul. But in any case these were a kind of revival rather than a true resurrection. For the ruler's daughter and the widow's son, Lazarus, Tabitha, Eutichus must all, at some time again, have returned unto death. The one real rising from the dead which the New Testament records is that of Jesus himself, when, the third day after he had been put to death on a Roman cross and entombed under Roman guard and seal, the tomb was found open and empty, his body had disappeared, and he himself through forty days appeared to his disciples alive, not under the common human conditions, but clothed again in his humanity for life in a world very different from this. Is it a credible thing?

Is there a way that is open to us, as reasonable beings, to believe it? When we come up to it on the level of common acquaintance with our human world, it does seem to us an incredible thing. It is as when we find ourselves at the face of some sheer precipice, rising before us out of the plain. It halts us hopelessly there; we cannot scale it. So it was to Herod Agrippa, as he heard Paul discoursing of Jesus and the resurrection. So it was to Festus, the Roman. The man, he thought, must be beside himself to speak of such a thing, as if it were true! And it had been precisely the same to Paul himself, some years before. When the report first came to his ears that Jesus, who was crucified, was alive again from the dead, his whole thought of it was as an incredible thing. He was out of all patience with people who were credulous enough to believe it, was fairly furious against them for being so wrong-headed and unreasonable. Even they, but a little while before, had thought just the same. Idle tales, it seemed to Peter and the rest when tidings first came that their Lord had been raised from the dead. It was to them, on that common level, an incredible thing. But Paul, with these others, found a way of approaching the matter which made it no longer an incredible thing, but a sober and reasonable faith. It was this he was trying to show to Agrippa by the question before us: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

What was his approach to truth of the resurrection? Simply faith in the one living God. With God to believe in, who made the world and all things that are therein, does not the difficulty of believing in life again from the dead very largely disappear? Here is this life of ours in the world that now is. That is credible at least. Whence did it come? Did it originate itself? Or is there One great enough, divine enough to be its Author and Giver? That, too, is easier to believe than it is to deny, as the faiths of men everywhere abundantly witness. Can we believe in God as Author of the life which we already have? Why then should it be thought a thing incredible with us, that God, the same who made us living souls, who has given us our present life, intelligent, reasoning, morally free, should give us anew, in a world beyond this, the very fullness of life? Resurrection from the dead can be held an impossible belief only on the ground that there is no God at all. The Sadducee who did not believe in any spiritual existence whatever, as a matter of course denied the resurrection. The materialist, or atheist of any description, naturally holds it an impossible thing. But even the agnostic, by his very creed, is bound to confess that it is possible, at least, for the dead to be raised. How much more the believer in God, as ever living, in whom all things live which already have life. To him life again from the dead is more than a bare possibility. It is a credible thing. It is open for him to believe. His very faith in

God brings him up to the subject as upon the same level with it, so that it need not be a difficult thing, ought to be a free and ready and reasonable thing for him to enter into it as a part of his faith. Is there a God over all? Does this world in which we live, and our life in it proceed from one who himself, ever liveth, to whom perfect intelligence and all-power belong? Have we so much as that rudiment of faith, then why should it be thought a thing incredible with us, that God should raise the dead? This is the Apostle's appeal in its baldest logical form. This of itself might well be conclusive and satisfactory enough. But when it comes to the revealing of God to us through Jesus Christ, it becomes a still more moving appeal, full of tenderness and comfort as well as conclusive, an appeal which satisfies the heart as well as the reason.

For God, as Christ makes him known to us, is not only the Author of our bodily life; he is the Father of our spirits. It is he who hath, not simply made us, but made us to be children of his own. Not merely with almighty power does God hold our lives in his hand, but with infinite love, according to Christ. He numbers the very hairs of our head. We are of value to him, not simply more in amount than many sparrows, but more with a higher kind of value. Our souls are precious in his sight with the worth of his own image upon them, with capacity in them for thought, for love and for holiness akin to his own. So great is his love for

us, that he has redeemed us, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish or spot. This is the God we believe in, if our faith is Christian, if we hold for the truth what Christ taught of God. Why then should it be thought a thing incredible with us that God, being such, having such a character, and such love for the souls of men, should raise the dead? Would it not rather be the incredible thing that He, that such a God, should give over the human spirit again to nothingness when the body dies? Is that easy to believe, especially when the human spirit has committed itself to the love of God, has been living its life in the body as one of his children, has been unfolding its spiritual powers in doing the will of God, has been taking upon it the beauty, loveliness, strength and worth of highest manhood? Take it in the case of this very man who spoke the words before us. There was Paul, getting well on toward the end of his earthly course; who would soon speak of himself as Paul the aged; what a life that man had been living; what service of God and humanity he had been fulfilling, and all, it would seem, in a body rather slight and frail. But if his outward man was perishing, his inward man had gone on to even greater heights of spiritual robustness, and richness and ripeness. What powers of mind and of heart were in him. In what wealth both of beauty and strength they appeared as he stood there a prisoner speaking for himself.

It is a spectacle of sheer sterling manhood, fine in its every quality, sound through and through. What was to become of all that? When he went on to Rome, and there, still fighting his good fight, fell at the hand of Nero's headsman, was that to be the end of it all? Did that choice human spirit, so alive with the very spirit of God, so redeemed to purity and fullness of life, so refined as gold from the furnace, so chastened and beautified by God's own hand, did it cease to be, altogether, when the life went out from that frail and perishing body? Is it a credible thing that God should bring to nothingness such a soul as that, after he had redeemed it and refined it into such quality and wealth of character, as most pleases him, as is most like his own? Would a gardener cut down the tree he had planted and cultivated with exceeding care, just as its fullness of fruitage was beginning to appear? Would the lapidary take a diamond that he had been toilsomely cutting and polishing out of the rough, till it flashed in the sunlight and shone like a star, and then smash it to bits on an anvil, or burn it to dust in an oxygen flame? Why then should it be thought a thing incredible with us that God should raise up such a great soul as Paul's to newness of life, in a world where its spiritual powers shall have full scope and be entirely at home? Is it not easier than anything else to believe, if so be that God lives and is at all such in his character and will as Jesus has revealed him to be?

And it is no less so when the life of man is cut off from earth in what seems to be the midst of its years. For the clearest instance of all is just such an one. It is that of Jesus, Son of man. There was a human life, lived for thirty years in almost total seclusion from public notice, then for three short years stood forth in light as full and as fierce as ever beat upon a throne. But brighter even than the light which beat upon it was the light of truth and of goodness with which it shone amid the darkness of this world. All that is pleasing to God in the life of humanity was there, certainly, if God is love and delights in what is holy and true. No falseness or uncleanness there to offend the pure eyes of him to whom all things are naked and open. That life of Jesus, Son of man,—how full of truth and grace, how strong in every moral quality, how rich with every spiritual grace, how overflowing with all deeds of goodness and of love! That character of his, what a summing up of all manly virtue, of all human excellence! But so soon came the cross with its deadly work! The dew of his youth was still upon him when he was cut off out of the land of the living. Was it the end of that one perfect man who ever lived on the earth, when he was numbered among the dead? Would God suffer his Holy One, so pleasing to him, so full of all spiritual worth, to cease forever from life? Is it a credible thing? Can we easily believe it? Surely not if we hold God to be what Christ has taught us he is. Such an one as the Son of

man, in spirit, in life, in character might go down to death; but it was not possible that he should be holden of it, God being what he is. This is the apostle's appeal for the reasonableness of the resurrection at its fullest and strongest. With what Jesus was in his holy humanity, and with what he showed the very heart of deity to be, why should it be thought a thing incredible with us that God should raise the dead?

And it is an appeal which we may all of us take home very close to ourselves. There are still men and women who ripen with age into saintliness of spirit and character, like Paul the aged. After their bodily powers have begun to fade as a leaf, the tree of life with them appears heavy laden with golden spiritual fruit. Have we not all known them, loved them, been refreshed by their ripeness of spiritual flavor? And then some day we have missed them from our midst, and the world has seemed tamer and poorer to us. What shall we think? Has all that choiceness of soul, that saintliness of life and of character gone out of existence forever? Did all that loveliness of spirit pass into nothingness when the breath went out of their bodies? If there be no God who is spirit, who himself is love, it may be so; better indeed that it should be so. For without God who is spirit and love, such spirits could nowhere be forever at home. But with God in his heaven, enthroned in holiness, diademed in love, as he sent his Son to earth to make him known, is it after all so very



hard a thing to believe that he will raise up such saintly souls again, to live forever with him in blessedness and peace? Why should it be thought incredible? What other faith so sober and so reasonable?

And equally is it so with other lives which do not come in this world to the maturity of years. Like the life of Jesus himself they are cut off midway, or even earlier, just as they have fairly begun to unfold with spiritual powers. While yet all is promise with them, while mind and soul are still in bud and blossom, they fall before the swift scythe of death and are seen no more in this earthly field. Again what shall we think? Is all that so much blighted hope? Do those unfolding powers of mind and soul cease from all existence when the youthful pulse no longer beats? Do these buddings and blossomings of spiritual promise pass into nothingness, become a mere memory when they are no longer here to adorn this world with their beauty and their sweetness? If there be no God who is the Father of our spirits, whose kingdom is of such as are childlike in trust of him and openness of soul toward him, then it may be so. But so long as God is God, so long as his is the infinite Father's heart, tender above all toward his little ones, why should it be a hard thing for us to believe that he sometimes takes human lives out of this world in the very flowering of their spiritual powers, that he may bring them to their fullest fruitage in his nearer presence? Is it not reasonable? Is it not

a faith well grounded in what our Lord has made known to us of the truth, the character, the will of God? Why should it be thought a thing incredible with us that God should raise the dead? Only let us believe in him, only let us know him as our Father, love the things he loves, with him prize spiritual worth above all else, and it cannot be very difficult for us to believe that he brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that all who have fallen asleep in Christ will God bring with him, that through Christ he will raise us up to the fullness of undying life.





NEW YORK, 1881.

## SELF-CULTIVATION FOR OTHERS' SAKE.

*And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*—John 17 : 19.

This saying of Jesus lays open before us one of the deepest truths of our life. It certifies to us the oneness, at bottom, of two things commonly thought of as opposed to each other. The most one can make of himself, and the most he can do for the benefit of other people, are apt to be looked upon as conflicting purposes in life. If either be taken, it is supposed to involve surrender of the other. Achievement with either is reckoned to be at expense of the other. Much that is said in these days, somewhat learnedly, about altruism and egoism, takes this for granted. Living to make the most of oneself is held to be necessarily selfish; and a life given up to the service of others is counted as neglect of oneself. And upon this supposition outcry is made against Christianity because it bids men seek their own salvation and the highest of blessing for themselves. The Christian hope of heaven is called other-worldliness. The one really unselfish life, we are told, is when a person lives solely for the good of others, and not at all for his own good, when he is all intent upon

doing the most for others, without regard to making the most of himself.

How shallow is such an idea becomes very apparent when, side by side with it, is put this saying of Jesus. "For their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified." With Jesus, Son of man, making the most of himself and doing the most for others were not conflicting motives of life; they were rather the two points which must be brought into line if we would give life anything like singleness of aim. The service which Christ was intent upon doing for humanity was not something different from what he was intent upon being, in his own person and character. It was precisely the same thing. His name for it, in both cases, is "sanctify," for which, unfortunately, our English word is not half strong enough. But the point just now is this: whatever the name by which it is called, Christ's aim, in the matter of his own person and character, was identical with what he was aiming at as a matter of service for other men. His making the most of himself coincided exactly with the most that he was able to do for others. His self-sanctifying was for sake of the sanctifying he would minister to others. The power to sanctify others became his by the sanctifying of himself. This oneness of self-cultivation with service of others, in Jesus our Lord, is what comes to us especially as a message this morning. And how great, how vital, how welcome a message it is; how it sets at rest for us a most weighty question

of our life; what harmony it makes between forces in our living which so often seem to conflict. What shall I have for my object in life? Shall I aim at the most and the best I can possibly be, in my own personal manhood, or at the most and the best I can possibly do, for the benefit of others? Shall I be intent upon cultivating, developing, improving myself, in all the powers and capacities which are personally mine, or shall I forego cultivation of myself, in my eagerness and pains for the improvement of others? How apt we are to be forcing for ourselves such questions as that. How often we split life apart for ourselves by such cleavage as that, and make a sheer dilemma of it. And we do it with the notion that such is our life. But not such is it, according to the teaching and spirit of Christ. Not such is the truth of it, as it is in him. He redeems our life for us from all such dilemma. He summons us to a way of living in which the most we can make of ourselves and the most we can do for others are not conflicting motives but one single aim; in which self-cultivation and service of others do not clash and counteract, but unite, as centripetal and centrifugal forces acting together give this earth of ours its free and sure path among other worlds in the vast field of space. Christ calls us to salvation in which the saving of ourselves, and the saving of others go hand in hand. The love of our neighbor, which he lays as commandment upon us, is no lessening of respect for ourselves. Rather is it love which

finds its full measure in the love we have for ourselves. The service of others which he sets before us as an object to live for, involves no neglect of the cultivation, enlargement, improvement of ourselves. A man's true self-cultivation and his real usefulness in the world are not each at expense of the other. Rather is the fulfillment of each to be found in the other. Our own salvation is the first of all qualifications to be of help in the saving of others. And we best work out our own salvation by diligence in the saving of others. We can be of real blessing to others only as we are blessed ourselves. And the fullness of blessing comes to us, when others are most richly blessed by means of us. Not by neglect of ourselves do we render true service to others. Rather by giving most diligent heed to ourselves. And our finest self-cultivation is reached, through the pains that we take for the improvement of other people. It is little love we ever have for our neighbor, unless there be in us a high self respect to which it measures up. And both self love and love of neighbor are alike at the full when they stand on a level with each other. So it stands in the teachings of Jesus.

And it was not more clear in his teaching than in the manner of life that he lived. The sentence of our text tells the story of his life, from beginning to end. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified." It is the commonest of all remarks which are made about the life of our Lord on the earth: that he lived it and gave it



for the benefit of others. Nowhere in all the world has there ever been seen such another instance of altruism, as we are so fond of calling it to-day. Living for the good of other people is an art of which he was the one perfect Master. There is no other human life in which service, both in spirit and act has ever reached anything like so complete a fulfillment. This is a fact so plain all through the life of our Lord, that hardly any one fails to remark it. And along with this fact is another no less to be remarked; the life of Jesus is equally a perfect example of the highest self-cultivation. His exceeding care for the best good of all other men was matched by the care that he took to be wholly a good man himself. His painstaking to free other men from their sin was no greater than the purpose with which he was intent upon keeping himself free from sin. The sinlessness of Christ is inseparable from the sacrifice he made to save other men from their sins. His offering of himself for the service of others was so great and so helpful, because he had in himself such perfection of all personal quality and worth. This man had wherewith to offer. He was Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, not only because he tasted death for every man, but equally because he was without spot or blemish. That he gave himself for others, even unto death, was not of itself his redeeming of the world. Along with that was the perfecting of himself as Son of man, in every power and capacity which makes for manhood, in every

excellence of spirit and act by which a man makes the most of himself. Self-cultivation, in this its truest sense, had its one complete example in Jesus our Lord. More than any other man he sanctified himself. Far beyond all other men he gave diligent heed to the manner of life he should live and the manner of person he should be. Above all other men was he true to himself, was he both careful and faithful, that everything which is right, is honorable, is worthy, should be fulfilled in himself. No other person was ever so intent as was Jesus, Son of man, upon making the most of himself. And no other person ever approached him in the accomplishment of it. Here is a fact not to be lost sight of, in looking to Christ for an example of what is called altruism. Coupled with it is a certain egoism, a self-cultivation, a sanctifying of himself, which is equally pronounced, equally intense. It was by no negligence within the vineyard of his own personal living that our Lord was able to do so much toward making other lives fruitful with good. Rather was self-cultivation with him a tending of that vine in which other lives were to be branches, by abiding in which they were to come to their fruitage of good. He went about doing good to others always with the volume of goodness in himself kept at the full. He made no attempt to help anybody to become anything which he was not already himself. When he said to a man, "Be thou clean," it was as one who had made sure that his own life was altogether clean.

When he bade men "be true," it was as one who himself was the truth. In calling upon men to have God's will for the law of their life, it was as one whose very meat was to do the will of his Father. What he could do by way of help and blessing to others had its measure in that stature of a perfect man which he had fulfilled. That others, also, might be sanctified, he sanctified himself.

And what was true in his case is the truth for us all to take to ourselves. The choice of an object for which to live is not between making the most of ourselves and doing most for the making of others. Both of these, together, make the one great object of life which is before us to choose in the calling of Christ. It is our own salvation and the saving of others, united into one single aim; it is the sanctifying of ourselves, that others also may be sanctified. Self-cultivation and service of others are not each at expense of the other; rather is each a necessity in order for the other to be. Consider it as a matter of the influence we can wield upon others for their moral betterment; that never can exceed the degree of moral improvement which is made in ourselves. No person ever succeeded in helping another up to any higher moral level than the one he stands on himself. No person ever was able to do good to others beyond the measure of goodness he has in himself. The man whose life is a curse to himself is not making it serve as a blessing to others. He who takes no pains to be personally a good man, is of quite as little service to any one else

for helping them to anything good. The moral uplift which any person can give to the lives of others is like water pressure; the force of it is measured by the height of the head. And equally true is it of the joy one may be the means of bringing into other people's lives. This is often spoken of as a worthy object to live for; living to make others happy, to give others joy. What at bottom is the chief secret of it? What but that one's own life have in it great depth and abundance of joy. It is certainly a poor way to make others happy by making one's self miserable. Small joy we shall ever give to others, if we be incapable of joy ourselves. Browning has said this well in the following lines:

“Just as I cannot, till myself convinced,  
Impart conviction, so to deal forth joy  
Adroitly, needs must I know joy myself.  
Renounce joy for my fellows' sake? That's joy  
Beyond joy; but renounced for mine not theirs?  
Why, the physician called to help the sick,  
Let me first of all discard my health!  
No, Son, the richness hearted in such joy  
Is in knowing what are the gifts we give,  
Not in a vain endeavor not to know.  
Therefore desire joy and thank God for it.”

Still farther might the poet have gone with his message and said: “Cultivate joy, that you may be able to impart it to other lives.” So it was that Jesus made life a joy for those who became his disciples. We call him “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” But there was acquaint-

ance which he had with joy no less great and full. He speaks of joy which was peculiarly his own; prayed that his disciples might have it fulfilled in them. The fullness of their joy, he said, was to be that his joy should be in them. And so it is that we are to give joy to other lives; not by renouncing our own for others' sake, but by so delighting ourselves in things which are truest and best that our joy shall be deep and abundant. And in like manner must be all our living for the service of others. It is according as we make the most of ourselves that we ever shall be able to do our utmost for the helping and making of others. What does any man's offer of service to others amount to when there is little or nothing to the man, when he will not take pains to be much of anything in his own life and character. Sacrifice to be true, to be of worth, must be the giving of one's life at its best. "If I were twenty," said a distinguished publicist, "and had but ten years to live, I would spend the first nine years accumulating knowledge and getting ready for the tenth." So did the Son of man, who had but thirty-three years to live, spend the first thirty of them in secluded self-cultivation, getting ready for the three years of service in public. And as he calls us to a life that is to be service of others after the example of his own, let us clearly and fully understand this: it means call to us to make the most of ourselves, that the service we do others may amount to the most. It means the saving of ourselves, that we may be of some use

for the saving of others. It means taking all pains to be good ourselves that we may be of some good to our fellow men. It means self-cultivation, the husbanding of all our personal capacities and powers, that the sacrifices we make of ourselves for others' sake may be of worth and avail. It means the sanctifying of ourselves, that others, also, may be sanctified by means of us.

## DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

*If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

*If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.—Matt. 27: 40, 42.*

It was the thought of many hearts on that memorable Friday, when darkness shut down at noonday over the closing acts of tragedy, so supreme and sublime. The language in which it had voice was mostly that of mockery and scorn. The passing crowd, with wagging heads and swaggering steps, flung it out in rough, heartless jesting. "Son of God, are you? Then come down from the cross!" By scribes, Pharisees, rulers, it was spoken in tones of taunting defiance. "He, the King of Israel? Now is his chance to prove it to us, by coming down from the cross." Two there were, whose speaking of it was in far more desperate earnest—the two hanging on crosses to the right and to the left of the crucified Nazarene. "Save thyself and us, if thou be the Christ," madly they begged of him, as drowning men grasp at straws. Such were the voices that spoke. But in other hearts, quite out of sympathy with all this, the like thought, we doubt not, was there, though unspoken. All His acquaintance and the women who followed Him from Galilee standing

afar off beholding, what were they thinking? That little group, within ear-shot of the cross, what would be passing in their minds, as those awful hours dragged slowly by? There was John, best beloved of the twelve, who had learned from their Lord, among other things, the secret of prayer, what must His prayer have been, at least till the last pathetic commission of His Master was spoken to Him from the cross! And Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whose soul the sword was then piercing quite through, she who at the marriage in Cana of Galilee had expected Him to show forth His glory and was not disappointed, she whose hopes in her Son had never come short, what hope must have lived on in her mother's heart, steadying, sustaining her amid anguish so crushing. For, as Marcus Dodds has so appropriately said: "Hers was not a hysterical, noisy sorrow, but quiet and silent. There was nothing wild, nothing extravagant in it. There was no outcry, no fainting, no wild gesture, nothing to show that she was the exceptional mourner and that there was no sorrow like unto her sorrow. She saw His head lifted in anguish and falling on His breast in weakness, and she could not gently take it in her hands and wipe the sweat of death from His brow. She saw His pierced hands and feet become numb and livid, and might not chafe them. She saw Him gasp with pain as cramp seized part after part of His outstretched body and she could not change His posture, nor give



liberty to so much as one of his hands. She had to suffer this in profound desolation of spirit. Her life seemed to be buried at the cross. To the mourning there often seems nothing left but to die with the dying. What significance, what motive can life have any more. None had been blessed with such love as Mary's. None could know as she knew the depth of Jesus' goodness, the unfathomable and unconquerable love He had for all. She knew there was none like Him, that if any could have brought blessing to the earth it was He, and there she saw Him nailed to the cross." Must it not be that she was still clinging fondly to the hope that there, again, He would manifest forth His glory as He had done at Cana, upon the hill brow at Nazareth, by the tomb of Lazarus at Bethany, and would come down from the cross to the utter defeat of his foes? Only when she heard Him speak to her His parting message, "Woman, behold thy Son," can we think that she quite gave it up. For it is the feeling which has so often come uppermost with us ourselves, as we have called to mind the scene of our Lord's crucifixion and lingered before it. If only, then and there, He had taken His power to Himself; if He had but turned the hill of Calvary into another mount of transfiguration; had He come down from the cross, thus making it manifest that neither Pilate nor Herod nor Annas, that not Death itself had any power against Him, what a triumph it would have been of right over wrong,

of truth over error, of good will toward men over inhumanity and hate, of God's kingdom on earth over powers of darkness and disorder! Is not this a feeling which is familiar to us all? Whether it has grown out of resistance on our part to the claims of Christ upon us, or out of the intensity of our drawing and attachment to Him, we know something of what it is to feel so. Personally it is what comes up in my remembrance as the earliest deep impression made upon me by the New Testament accounts of our Lord's crucifixion. As I heard them read in church and at family worship, as mother told them to us Sunday afternoons, as I came to read them for myself, I was eager in taking up the cry, "If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross." Not by way of siding with those who said so to mock and defy Him; but as prompted by the powerful hold which personally He had taken upon me. The impulse of it was friendly. A childish impulse you may call it; but are not many of our best impulses the ones that persist with us on from our childhood into maturer life? And this impulse to borrow from the enemies of our Lord expression for our friendship and loyalty to Him has something very persistent about it. "If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross."

What is more, from His own words it is to be understood that it was quite within His power so to do. "No man taketh my life from me," He said, "but I lay it down of myself. I have power

to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." At his betrayal in the garden, he gave himself up to arrest, well aware that he had but to ask it of His Father to bring the hosts of heaven at once to His rescue. Being the Son of God, as He certified to the high priest He was, He might have come down from the cross. That He did not was not because He could not. He endured the cross to the end, despising the shame of it, not from the forcing of it upon Him by any, but from His own taking of it to himself. He tasted death not as a cup that was pressed to His lips by some irresistible hand; He could have put it from Him as He did the cup of drugged wine offered Him as He hung on the cross. The very language of His prayer in Gethsemane reveals His consciousness of this, "If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it." Whoever it might be that had poured out the cup, whoever had put such depth and intensity of bitterness in it, the drinking of it would be an act of His own, free, uncompelled. Was it not that, for one thing, which made Gethsemane an agony for Him, so intense, so extreme? He was facing a death most cruel, most shameful, not as one faces the inevitable, but as the supremest responsibility is faced. Such are the crises of life in which conscientious souls are most sorely tried, are wrung with severest anguish. Not when suffering must be borne, when even death must be met and there is no alternative, but when it rests with the person himself whether he will take

the suffering, make the self-sacrifice or avoid it by some way still open to him. This, in part, was the agony of Jesus which crushed Him to the earth and caused Him to sweat as it were great drops of blood, out under shadow of the night and the gray olive trees. The cup of self-sacrifice to the full was at hand for His drinking. In all the bitterness of it as suffering of just for the unjust, as the sinless offering himself for the sinful, it was mingled and poured out. There remained only His own taking of it, putting it to His lips, draining it to the dregs. In large part that was the cross; His own choice, as sinless Son of man to suffer for sinful humanity, His own choice, as Son of God to die for the ungodly. What He might have done there upon Calvary, when the words of railing at Him by His foes came so near to the prayer lying unspoken in the hearts of His friends, was more than hinted beforehand in the garden, when in full self composure he faced His captors, and said, "I am He." At once they went backward and fell to the ground.

To show Himself the Son of God by coming down from the cross was well within His power, had He chosen. But not so did He choose. Why not? Because He had something greater, something diviner to do; because there was a showing of himself the Son of God, and a showing of God as the Father, more unmistakable, more conclusive. Had Jesus descended from the cross in answer to outspoken defiance of His foes and un-

spoken longing of His friends, it would have been a glorious manifestation. There would have been a fine poetic justice about it. For the time it would have been signal victory of goodness and right over baseness, malice and inhuman wrong. But it would have been one of those victories from which reaction sooner or later is certain to follow, a victory which leaves the real warfare still waging, the real enemy still unsubdued. Had Jesus shown himself the Son of God by coming down from the cross to the utter rout of Jews and Romans together, there would have been in it a certain intense satisfaction to all lovers of justice, to all who have any sympathy with goodness; but it would be satisfaction leaving still unsatisfied what is deepest in the nature and need of our human souls. Mere poetic justice is not a long enough line to sound the depths of man's moral nature. The greatest poets are themselves the best of witnesses to this fact. The masters of tragedy, Æschylus and Sophocles, have had glimpses of it and made it their message. And chief of them all, our own English Shakespeare, in his *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, has, to use his own fine phrase, so held the mirror up to nature, as to discover in human action and experience, depths of moral disease, of spiritual disorder, not to be reached by what is known as simply poetic justice. For that which the masters of tragedy thus exhibit, the tragedy of the cross, acted through to the end, is solution. The problem of evil in human life is old as history,

as antiques human tradition, and is new with each fresh generation. Keys to it have been searched for in every nook and corner of human inquiry and effort. But anything like solution of it has been reached only by this one key to it, given in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. That sacrifice of himself, the sinless for the sinful, not stopping short of the utmost length to which sacrifice can go,—there is solution for the problem of evil, not by way of explaining the evil so much as by taking it away. Sacrifices there had been by sinful men for their own evil doing, in every conceivable form, even to giving the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul. But all that was no healing of the disease, at any rate was healing it but slightly. It takes more than sacrifice of ours for ourselves to cure us of evil. Only the divine self-sacrifice for us is equal to that. And the divine self-sacrifice for our human sin is what Jesus our Lord manifested, realized, ministered to the full, when He did not come down from the cross, but endured it to the end. The one power belonging to God himself by which even He is able to save us altogether from our sins is His love. That His love for us is such, that God himself in His own being and character is such love, He has certified, has put to all possible proof in the cross of His Son Jesus Christ. Would it have been showing himself Son of God, had Jesus come down from the cross? It was a far greater showing of it that He kept on with the sacrifice of the cross till He had

tasted death for every man. Not even His resurrection was a clearer showing of his Divine Sonship. "By the resurrection," says Paul, "He was declared to be the Son of God in power. But by the cross was He declared to be the Son of God in love." Keenly satisfying, then, as it might have been had He descended from the cross, to the dismay of His foes and the delight of His friends, there is satisfaction far deeper for us all to find in friendship with him, in that He did not choose so to do, but, loving His own, loved them to the end, that He endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy of making known and ministering to men the love of His Father and theirs.

One other thing; because Jesus our Lord did not come down from the cross, as His enemies openly challenged and His disciples secretly prayed He would do, we are not left to meet the last enemy alone. One aspect of death which makes it so dreaded is the awful loneliness of it. In everything else we can have the company of our friends, if we show ourselves friendly. In the blessings and joys of our life there is place for companionship, to enlarge the blessing and help the joy. When trials and sorrows come there is friendship deep enough, firm enough to be strongly sustaining, to be of exceeding great comfort. There is the brother who is "born for adversity," as the proverb has it. Even in severest sickness our best friends can be so much company for us. But when it comes to the gates of death there is the parting of

company. None are near enough akin, nor wedded to each other closely enough to be companions in making that passage. Though they might say, "Let us die together and meet death with clasped hands," there would still be the loneliness of it for each. There is but one companion who can go on with us when the shadows of death must be entered. It is He who did not turn back when, of His own accord, He came to the gate of it, who did not come down from the cross, though it lay in His power. He is the friend who sticketh closer than a brother, for one thing because He keeps company with His friends through the valley of shadows, on to the house of His Father and theirs. It is thus that He robs death of its terrors. And what other way has anything of reality to it? We try to hide from our sight the grim aspects of death. We speak of it in flowery figures as we cover coffins and graves with profusion of flowers. We say there is no such thing. We disguise it to ourselves and to others in terms of more desirable life. But in spite of us the dread features of it will show themselves at times through all our disguisings. The awful loneliness of it comes over us. The very fragrance of the flowers which we load upon it brings us shuddering and shrinking from it. One victory there is over death which is real and complete. It is companionship with Him who alone does not part company with those who walk with Him when death's gate is reached. This He is able to do because He himself overcame the



sharpness of death, because He did not come down from the cross, but by the suffering of it laid down His life to take it again. To walk with Him, in newness of life, is to have companionship through the awful loneliness of death itself into the glorious company of His own and our own life in the life evermore.

So it is that we commemorate Him as our Saviour and Lord. We do show His death till He come. For the sufferings of that is He crowned with glory and honor. He showed himself the Son of God not by coming down from the cross before death had passed upon Him, but by entering into the very citadel of death by means of the cross and putting the last enemy under His feet. Instead of such descent from the cross there is that so imperishably pictured in Rubens' renowned altarpiece in the Antwerp Cathedral. Over the crossbeams above, the strong arms of men lower the lifeless body in its winding sheet to the tender hands of the women below. What has been said of it by way of criticism is the exceeding truth of it, is really the highest possible praise. "The body of Jesus is not that of a God which is to rise again the third day; it is the remains of a man, in which the flame of life has ceased to burn." Is it not just this by which Jesus bade His disciples always keep Him in remembrance; that as Son of man He poured out his soul unto actual death, that His descent from the cross was not in super-human display, but in sharing to the full with our

humanity what happens alike to all men. More needful and blessed for us such coming down from the cross, than what His crucifiers challenged Him to do, glorious as that might have been. It is for each of our lives to be as the garden of Joseph, a place for the body of Jesus reverently, tenderly to be laid away, in its turn to become the place of His resurrection, the witness of His taking again the life that for us He laid down. The temptation is great to-day, as it was centuries ago, to ask of Christianity that it dispense with the cross. It is still the challenge of such as oppose it: "Come down from the cross and we will believe you." It is still the longing of many who are kindly disposed toward Christ and His teaching. How beautiful, how welcome His gospel would be if only the cross could be eliminated from it. But the mistake of that desire is as great now as it was then. The gospel of Christ has its fitness and worth as a message for humanity to-day because it is preaching of the cross. The name of Jesus, to-day and forever, is above every name, is the name to be most firmly believed in, most devoutly remembered, most lovingly cherished and confessed, most obediently honored, because when that bitter cup of death for our sin was mingled and poured out for Him, He did not put it aside; when in sufferings immeasurable the iniquity of us all was made to meet upon him,—He did not come down from the cross.

## CHRISTIAN STRENGTH; ITS SCOPE AND ITS SECRET.

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*—Is. 40 : 31.

The distinguished Scotch scholar, George Adam Smith, has brought fresh light upon this familiar verse of the Bible. He first raises the question as to whether the order of thought is correct. Mount up with wings,—run,—walk. That does not look very much like progress. It seems rather the reverse of it. Instead of strength renewed, it looks more like strength giving out. From flying to running, from running to walking, is not that a sinking rather than a rising scale? What is there promising and hopeful to that? Is it not a clear sign of weakening, rather than renewing of strength? It is in his answering such questions that Dr. Smith is especially suggestive. He shows this to be after all the proper order of thought, “a natural and true climax rising from the easier to the more difficult, from the ideal to the real, from dream to duty, from what can be only the rare occasions of life to what must be life’s usual and abiding experience.” He shows it from the history of Israel as they came back from Babylon to the

land of their fathers. There was first "the great flight of hope, on which we see them rising in their psalms of redemption as on the wings of an eagle"; next a "rush at the return; and then the long tramp, day after day, with the slow caravan, at the pace of its most heavily laden beasts of burden, when they shall walk and not faint should indeed seem to them the sweetest part of their God's promise." Again was the same order followed in the earliest Christian history. The strength of the Apostles, and of the Church in their time, appears in the sublime faith with which they mounted up as upon eagles' wings, then in the swift speed with which they ran forth on their great gospel mission, but more than all in the steady, untiring persistence with which they traveled on along the beaten highways of the world, and without faltering or fainting carried out the teachings of their Lord in the common walks of life. "And so must it ever be," says Dr. Smith, "first the ideal, and then the rush at it with passionate eyes, and then the daily trudge onward, when its splendor has faded from the view, but is all the more closely wrapped round the heart. For, glorious as it is to rise to some great consummation on wings of dreams and song, glorious as it is, also, to bend that impetus a little lower and take some practical crisis by storm, an even greater proof of our religion and of the help our God can give us, is the life-long tramp along earth's common surface, without fresh wings of dream, or the excitement of rivalry, or the attrac-

tion of reward, but with the head cool, and the face forward, and every footfall upon firm ground. Let hope rejoice in a promise which does not go off into the air, but leaves us upon solid earth; let us hold to a religion, which while it exults in being the secret of enthusiasm and the inspiration of heroism, is daring and divine enough to find its climax in the commonplace."

With this light upon the words of the prophet before us, let us dwell upon them for a little, as they set forth to us our Christian strength, its scope and its secret: "But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

A chief element of strength which Christianity has always put into human life is in the purity and height of its ideals. It is one clear mark in the teaching of Jesus which is missing almost everywhere else. He sets the ideal of human life the very highest it possibly can be, and he holds it there throughout. He never blinks it in the slightest, never allows any letting down from it, or any accommodation of it to prevailing ideas or imperfect conditions of men. In his approach to men with their spiritual ignorance and moral obtuseness, Christ did adapt his forms of speech and methods of work to the case as it was. But nowhere did he ever drop down from the supreme height of his spiritual and moral ideal to something that should seem easier and more feasible for weak

and imperfect men. Jesus Christ never said to any person, this truth which I declare to you is the ideal of human life, but because of your blindness or weakness you will have to live for the time as if something else were the truth. To some extent, he said, even Moses had accommodated the ideal of his teaching to human imperfection and weakness. For the hardness of their heart, Moses had given the people a divorce law considerably below the ideal. But Jesus Christ set forth the ideal of marriage once more at the clearest, the purest, the highest. Divorce for the one sin alone which nullifies marriage, and that only to the person sinned against, never to one who is guilty of the sin; does that seem, to-day, too high and severe and ideal for this free country of ours, where so many things are liable to come in between husband and wife to divide them in their sympathies and tastes and make their marriage practically void? Then how must it have appeared in his own time, when divorce was so easy even among the Jews, when the prevailing ideas of marriage, especially in the great Gentile world were so exceedingly lax? But in an age of low standards and loose practices as to marriage and divorce, Jesus held up and enforced the one highest, and the most severe ideal, without a hint that anything short of that was allowable for any. And this is simply a specimen instance. It is so that Christ made use of the ideal upon every side of human life. Was love his ideal for man in relation to his fellows? He did not, like

the Rabbis, drop down from that to a working of love in practical life which allows a man to hate his enemies. Love as an ideal, with him, meant in practical life,—“Love your enemies.” The ideal with him was always the highest. And it was, at the same time, always the truth, to go directly at work with, as a matter of actual living. It is what he himself did with the ideal in his own life, as Son of man. He lived his own pure and perfect ideals. He went straight into action with them, and made them matters of conduct and character. And it is what he taught other men to do with the same pure and perfect ideals. As he set for men the pattern of manhood, at the very loftiest level, he did not say to them: “Now that is a long way above you. You cannot expect to come very near to it. But do your best and you will make at least some little approach toward it.” Rather did he say, as he gave to men his perfect ideal of all that is human, “Take it as truth to go into action with at once. It is for you to work with, not simply to work toward. It is what you are to live out, rather than to live up to.” And there is the strength of Christianity, as regards the ideal. All the power that lies in having an ideal, the very highest and purest, belongs to it. But the strength of it is more than that. It has also the power which lies in having the ideal as the direct and actual working force. That is new birth from above. That is true inspiration. That is the strength with which a man mounts up with wings as an

eagle. Without that, the ideal, by its very purity and height, gives one despair, rather than courage and hope. It is high as heaven. It is far above me. What use in my striving after what I cannot expect to reach. I might as well think to fly without wings. But the ideal of our human life as it is given us in the teaching, the example, the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not put us in any such case. It is not our despair, but our inspiration and hope; because the ideal itself, high and perfect as it is, is the very truth which we are to proceed with and act on at once. The ideal in Christ is what we have not so much to live up to, as to live up on. So the strength it gives us is, as it were, wings with which to mount up like eagles. How is it that the eagle is able to rise up so high in the heavens and be sustained there hour after hour, apparently as much at ease as if upon a nest of down. The whole secret of it is not yet known as a matter of mechanics. But this much of it is an open secret, the eagle mounts up into the air, by committing himself to the air and beginning to act upon it down where it comes nearest to the earth. The air itself is what the eagle has to work with for rising up into its sublimest heights. And it is like that with the ideal of our human life as given us in Christ. It is by committing ourselves to it and beginning to work with it as a spirit of life down here, where we are, that we mount up into it and rise to its heights. Inseparable from the ideal of Christ is the spirit of



Christ. Our upreaching after likeness with him brings his uplifting of us into likeness with him. Our aspiring toward him brings his inspiring of us. This, first of all, is what makes Christianity so strong. This is a chief element of the strength which it puts into human life. It summons men to the loftiest ideals of life; and at the same time makes those very ideals serve as spirit to quicken, as basis to act on, for mounting up into them. There is no tyranny of the ideal in the kingdom of God. Rather is there full freedom for every man in it by the commitment of himself to its one perfect ideal. So is the all holy Son of man, not the despair of sinful humanity but its glorious hope, its one true inspiration, its complete renewal of strength.

Another element of strength which Christianity puts into human life is its directness and swiftness of motive. "They shall run and not be weary." It is a well-known fact in the field of mechanics that there is always a great waste of force when it cannot be directly and quickly applied. This is one advantage in the force of gravity wherever it can be used,—its action is direct and ready. The great outcry of the mechanical spirit against the steam engine, is that it wastes ten times as much force as it uses. If only some direct way could be found to set free the force that there is in a ton of coal, without having to go so far around, literally through fire and water, by means of furnace and boiler, engine and dynamo, what a world of saving there would be! What a blessing to the

world will be the genius who can make that discovery! Something like that is what Christianity does for human life in the matter of its motives. Christ summed up all motives of human duty in the single word "love." But that was not all. That had been done before. The law of Moses had said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and thy neighbor as thyself." But Jesus Christ set free that twofold force of love as the motive bearing singly and directly upon human life. In him love of God and of fellow man move upon us as one direct, swift appeal in which no fraction or moral or spiritual force is wasted or lost. "For love of Christ," means for love of God and for love of humanity, both in one. To do some act "for Christ's sake" is to do it for God's sake and at the same time for humanity's sake. And what motive so direct, so swift, so free in its promptings to life as this! If ever feet of man can run untiring upon any path of life, and weariness be shaken off from them that their speed slacken not, it is when love is the motive prompting them to it. For love of country, how tired soldiers have been able to forget they were tired in their eagerness to charge and carry the enemies' works. For love of wife and children, how many a man, to-day, is keeping on unwearied in the hot rush of business, or at least without stopping to ask himself whether he is tired. Let a man come home wearied from his day's work, to find his only child taken suddenly very sick and how ready, how swift he will be to

run for the doctor. What race of life can so weary a man, but that love coming in as a motive will be refreshment for him and renewing of strength? And it is the same when our Christian calling is so to run that we may obtain. Love of Christ is the motive for it, all direct and all embracing. In that is renewing of strength, that we may "run and not be weary."

Once more; the strength of Christianity is in its staying quality for the common paths and slower steps of life; "And they shall walk and not faint." Is not this truly the most promising and blessed part of the Christian message to us? For every human life has in it far more of the commonplace than of anything else. "The great days of the year," as one has said, "are few. And the matter of all common days is made up of ordinary and stale transactions. Scarcely once a year does anything really remarkable befall us. With the exception of some few striking passages or great and critical occasions perhaps not more than five or six in all, our life is made up of common things." If the strength of any person's life belonged only to its great occasions, then there would be all together very little of it; for its great occasions are so small a fraction of any human life. Were it only when we have some flight to take, or some swift run to make, that there was renewal of strength for us, then life through far the greater measure of it must be weariness to us. Along most of its road we must make weak and fainting work of it.

For most of its road has to be traversed at walking pace. And here is where the gospel of Christ makes full proof of itself. It is the redeeming of our human life throughout; of what is commonplace in it, as well as of what is more remarkable and rare. Christ came into this human life of ours, not to free it from routine and commonplace, but to make it free within the very routine and commonplace of it. His mission was to convert life for us, not so that it should be all flight, or running, and not walking any more; but so that in the walking, as well as the running, and the flight of it, there should be both freedom and strength. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world," said Jesus of his disciples. A true Christian life is not all inspired uplift of soul; or spirited rush into heroic action; it is, also, and in very large part, the solid stepping of a godly walk. So it was with the life of Jesus himself. There was one short shining night of transfiguration; there were years upon years of plodding carpenter work. There were miracles of mercy wrought instantly by his hand, but for every one of them there were days upon days of the commonplace touched into Christly quality and strength. And so he calls us to be his disciples that we may have the Christly quality and strength in our daily walk among commonplace things, as well as in up-lift of soul and promptness for service. In him is the renewal of our strength, that we may "mount up with wings," that we may "run and

not be weary," and, crowning it all, that we may "walk and not faint."

And the secret of it all on our part? Simply that we wait upon God, as both in word and in life Jesus himself has so well taught us how. He has so made God known to us that we can altogether trust him. In all things he leads us in the way of God's will. If gladly we give ourselves to be so led of him, it will be the renewing of our strength and we shall mount up with wings as eagles, shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint.

## THE UNTOLD RESOURCES OF FAITH.

*If it were not so I would have told you.*—John 14 : 2.

This is a saying of Jesus which will bear being taken out of its immediate connection; for the principle underlying it is of very wide application. It is a saying which greatly extends for us the boundaries of our Christian faith, and maps out its field on a much larger scale than we are often in the habit of thinking.

That we may be entirely sure of whatever we find distinctly and positively stated in the teaching of our Lord is a commonplace, is well nigh an axiom of our believing in him. What we have his word for, directly and clearly, we can depend on as being the truth. His "Verily, verily I say unto you," with reference to anything, settles that thing for us, if we are really believers in him. So surely it must be, or our faith in him goes for little or nothing. It is the very least we can do, if we call him Master and Lord. It is small faith that we have in any person if we are not able to take his word when he gives it to us most clearly stated, most solemnly pledged. Unless we can depend on what is told us by one whom we hold as a friend, our confidence in him is certainly meagre and of very little worth. It is eminently so of our faith in Christ as Saviour

and Lord of our lives. If we believe in him at all his word clearly spoken, sacredly given, must be for us the truth on which we can surely put our dependence. That is the narrowest boundary which can be set for Christian faith, if there be any real faith about it. And it is the way in which a good many people bound for themselves the field of faith. They make their map of it entirely from the words of Christ as recorded in the gospels. What our Lord stated in his teaching so clearly that there can be no mistake about it; what he promised in unmistakable terms, are the basis and body of their Christian believing. These are the limits within which they hold and exercise their faith as disciples of Christ.

Now this in itself is much. It is a very considerable and very excellent part of that faith in God and in himself to which Jesus summons us by his gospel message. To take him at his word, to be sure that he tells us the truth in all that he declares to us of God, and our own human life, to rest assured of the good things which he promises us on definite terms, that is a good deal. All that is well, so far as it goes. Only that is not by any means all. The field for our Christian believing is far larger than that. It cannot be enclosed within any such limits. That is merely a sectional map of it. The whole area of it is very much greater. For there is a faith that is larger, that is more vital and Christian than simply taking the Lord at his word in all that he tells us. It is such trust in

Christ himself, that we are sure of him when he keeps silence, no less than when he speaks plainly. Our common experience with people is witness to us of this. It is not the person in whom we have surest confidence, whose word we insist upon having, from whom we exact a definite promise. It is always a sign that our faith in someone is rather uncertain, is somehow lacking, when we put one under oath in order to believe what one says. There are people in whom we have just enough faith so that we will take their word wherever they give it; we feel safe in depending upon them for whatever they certify to us, or promise us in so many words. But that is not the limit of confidence between man and man. There is a still fuller measure and finer quality of it among the closest of friends. A few people there are in whom we have such entire and implicit faith that it does not make us really any more sure of them to have them tell us or promise us something. We trust them in their silences as well as in their utterances. We can depend on them for what they do not speak of to us, as well as for what they tell us all about. Gladly we take the word of such a person, whenever there is occasion. But more to us than any word or all words of his is the man himself, in person and in character so worthy of our trust.

Like this, only in a still deeper and more vital way, is the faith that we should have in Christ our Lord and through him in God our Father. It is more than taking him at his word, confident that



all he tells us is surely so. It is trusting him in person; as one whose character and relation to us make us sure of him in things whereof he does not speak, as well as in things whereof he speaks most plainly. Not only may we depend on the truth of what he tells us, but there is truth upon which we may depend because he has not told us otherwise. "If it were not so I would have told you." The silences of Jesus are to be trusted as well as his utterances. There is faith for us to have, when, as in the presence of Pilate he gave no answer, not even so much as one word; or as when in the presence of those sent to take him, never man spake as he. For it is the man himself whom we have to believe in, more and greater than any and all words even of his own.

Is it not clear, then, how greatly this enlarges for us the field of our Christian faith? For, great as the words are which our Lord has spoken to us as to God and our duty and the life eternal, there are many matters and weighty about which he has given us no word at all. If only he had told us about them, we should know just what to believe. With all of our human questionings, the highest and deepest to which Christ makes answer so fully by the words of his gospel, there are other questionings of ours to which his only answer is silence. Some of them may be idle questions, without spiritual purpose and earnestness, as when Herod questioned him with many words and Jesus answered him nothing. But there are other ques-

tions which we ask in all earnestness, from out the devoutest depths of our heart, to find that silence is the only answer to them from Christ our Teacher and our Lord. It was such a case with those first disciples, which gave occasion for the saying of our text. It was nothing idle or unspiritual that was weighing upon their minds; it was one of the most solemn and weighty of all matters pertaining to our human life. The dearest friend they had on earth was saying his last farewells to them. He had just been telling them how short a time he would still be with them before he would go whither they could not follow him, till long afterwards. And their questions were the old and ever new ones as to the whereabouts of that undiscovered country, the whats and hows and whys with reference to it. Whither goest thou? Why cannot we go with thee? It was that chapter in human life when men are most thoroughly in earnest, when the heart is wrung with most anxious questionings, when its troubling is most keen and real. What help had Christ to bring them in so great trouble? Not words, but himself. "Believe also in me." And it was his silence more than anything he had been saying by which he appealed to them for confidence. "If it were not so I would have told you." The things which were troubling them they might well take for granted. The very fact that he had not spoken of them at all was assurance for them. The greatest thing of all he had told them often, plainly, beyond mistake. God is their Father, and through

Jesus Christ, his Son, has called them to be his children. Must not a Father such as he have an eternal home for all who become eternally his children? Will he leave them homeless orphans after he has made them spiritually his sons? What need to tell those who have found in God the Father who has loved them, even to the sending of his Son for their redeeming, that they shall be forever at home in company with him? The need would be to tell them, if it were not so. Home is what belongs naturally to a Father. It is a matter of course that every true child of his should have a place with him. It is something for everyone who trusts God and loves him as the eternal Father to be sure of, unless some one who knows shall tell him otherwise. And he who came forth from the Father, to make him known as such to men, gave not the slightest hint of anything but that. In my Father's house are many mansions, many abiding places. With God as the ever-living Father there is room to make eternally at home, all who will be his children. If there be any trouble at all about it, may we not depend upon it that Jesus, Son of man, and Son of God, would have made it known? This is the appeal of our Lord to his own silence on the subject, up to this point in the teaching of his first disciples. If they had faith enough in him to believe that the great and eternal things he told them were the truth, could they not also trust him for the eternal truth of other things of which he had not found it needful to say anything?

Especially when his silence was consent to what followed naturally from the words he spoke, is there not a confidence to be put in it and a rest of soul for his disciples to be getting from it? The gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is not limited to the messages of truth and love and life which fell from his gracious lips. Some of its good news is simply no news. It is the way we often take things in our common life. No news, many times, we accept as good news; especially when it is some trusted friend that we are depending on in the matter. To anyone in whom we have full confidence we are free to say: "Unless I hear otherwise from you, I shall be sure that all is well." It is such confidence in him, as nearer and better to us than all earthly friends, to which our Lord invites us when he says: "If it were not so I would have told you." There is gospel for us, the message of good news, in his silences as well as in the great words, the words of eternal life which he has spoken. There are things which we may depend upon, points at which we may be sure that all is well, simply because we have heard nothing about them from him, our most trusty of all friends.

One of them is akin to what was troubling the hearts of those first disciples upon the occasion of our text. It has to do with the world to come and the life there, of which Christ himself is our promise and our hope. Many hearts are troubled with questioning about the relation which dearest earthly friends are to have with each other in the

heavenly life. Will there be ready and full recognition? Will there be companionship again on any such terms of closeness and endearment as have been so precious and helpful here on earth? It is something of which our Lord did not speak in so many words. He has not told us plainly and particularly how that would be. There is no "Verily I say unto you," of his, to set all question at rest. Certain sayings of his do very strongly imply it. It is the inference which naturally follows from all that he taught as to life in the world to come, that the closest ties of earth are to be there reunited, the most loving of earthly endearments to be there fulfilled. But it is left with us to make the inference. He does not make it for us. He nowhere positively declares to us the thing of which we so greatly want to be sure. What then? Is it something to continue troubled and uncertain about? Is it not rather a place for fullest confidence in the very silence of our Lord and Saviour? Here, if anywhere, the principle must apply: "If it were not so I would have told you." "Let not your heart be troubled" as to that. "Believe in me. If it be any mistake to look forward to the knowing of our best loved on earth in the heavenly life and of accompanying with them again as part of the eternal blessedness of it, I would certainly have warned you against such mistake. A thing so readily inferred from all of my teaching, a thing so naturally hoped for by the heart that is most deeply and devoutly Christian, if that were not so I would

have told you." It is part of our Christian faith to be sure in such a case, because we know in whom we have believed; because our confidence is not in words merely, not even the words of our Lord. It is Christ himself whom we trust, and his very silence is as sure for us as his word.

One other great matter to which this applies, and it is really the greatest of all; it is the sacrifice of Christ as our Saviour from sin. Here very largely it is the silence of Jesus through which our faith lays hold upon him. When it comes to his suffering unto death, our Lord had very little to say, except to tell how bitter a cup it was and how freely he drank it, that he might save humanity out of its sin. As a lamb, dumb before its shearers, he was led to the sufferings of death. In Gethsemane it was only a sentence or two of his prayer that the disciples heard. The burden of its agony did not come to their ears. Before the high priest, before Pilate and Herod, he kept silence most of the time. Through the long hours at Calvary there were very few words. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is in very large measure his silence. And yet is it not there that we have fullest occasion to put our trust in him? Is it not there that our confidence in him may be the deepest and surest? In that silence of his was the crowning proof of his faithfulness to us.

And this is the faith to which he invites us, that we believe not only his word but in his very self; that we trust him, not only for the things that he

tells us but for all other things which belong to the saving, the enriching, the fulfilling of our life. "Believe in God, believe also in me. If it were not so I would have told you."

## AN OVERWORKED PROVERB.

*The word of the Lord came again unto me saying, what mean ye that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold all souls are mine. As the soul of the Father, so also the soul of the son is mine.—Ezek. 18: 1-4.*

To what extent the proverb in question had become current in that age, may be judged by the fact, that it is cited by both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, each the foremost religious teacher and reformer of his time. And they both, alike, cite it to protest against it. It was a saying so much in everybody's mouth that much mischief was the result of its being so generally taken for granted. It was proving a serious obstacle in the way of movements for reform, such as these great prophets were intent upon bringing to pass. Their appeals to the people for better things, both in public and private life, were blunted in their edge by meeting with this proverb at every turn. The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. The message of God with which they were charged, whether it were the bare and direct, "thus saith the Lord," or were clothed in the



imagery of parable or vision, had the force of it parried by this popular notion, that the present evils were a heritage from the past which could not be escaped. It was the "iniquity of the fathers" that was being visited upon them; what use in preaching reform to them! What use for them to be attempting amendment, or struggling for abatement of abuses which had come down to them as a legacy from the past. So they took refuge in the proverb, as excuse enough for going with the drift. The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. But these prophets, each, in his time, got very tired of hearing it. Emphatically, solemnly, in God's name they entered their protest against the sour grape philosophy of life. It was not that the proverb was altogether false. A certain fraction of truth, even of divinely revealed truth, had been clothed out and popularized under this picturesque phrasing. The mischief of it was precisely there. It was a half-truth, held to and accounted, as if it covered all the facts in the case. It is true of every generation that certain evils from which it suffers have come to it by way of inheritance from foregoing generations. That is, it is a part of the truth. It is written in the very law by which our humanity is bound together in the bundle of life, that each age, for better or for worse, does much in setting for the next age its problems to solve. This is so vital a fact that account was made of it in the ten commandments, that moral core of

Israel's law which has supplied all after ages with a standard of morals. That the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations, and God's mercy shown unto thousands of them that keep his commandments, was part of the truth made manifest in that revelation of law; but it was not the whole of that truth; it was simply a fraction. Many other fractions must be taken along with it to make the whole truth. Within its own limits the proverb was true. There is a certain "setting on edge" which children's teeth take from the sour grapes eaten by their fathers. But to make out of that the chief fact of life, to base all notions of duty and of conduct upon it, is greatly overworking the proverb. And it was just such overworking of an adage with some truth in it against which these prophets and reformers of old so stoutly protested. And the form in which they entered their protest is equally, even more specially worthy of remark. It is very striking in the words of our text. "As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." The half truth is met, not with denial, but by matching it with the other half of the truth. The mischief done by the overworked proverb is corrected by bringing into the foreground other truth, more vital still, which in its place requires to be heeded. All souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so the

soul of the son. If it be a fact that each generation inherits something, for better or for worse, from the generation preceding, it is a still greater fact that each generation stands directly accountable to God for the sort of generation it is. Israel in the days of Jeremiah, in the days of Ezekiel, was suffering from abuses which had come down to them from generations before. But Israel in that age as in every other were the people of God. To him they were directly accountable, not only as a nation but as individuals, for the course they were taking, for the sort of life they were living. Whatever of evils had come down to them from the past, it was their present and imperative business, with God's help, to be correcting them. Whatever of good was their heritage, it was their present business, with God's help, to be improving upon it. They were in God's hand for this, as their fathers had been before them. The past history of that people had not so tied them up to abuse and disaster but what they were free to make a new history for themselves of a very different sort. They were not bound by their heritage of evil to go on in the same evil courses. There was something more binding upon them by far than that—God's claim upon them as a people, their relation to God, as belonging to him, each soul by itself. Here was a fact more vital still, weightier, more considerable by far than the other, the fact by which, before everything else they were bound. "All souls are mine, as the soul of the father so

also the soul of the son." Every man in his own person, directly related and immediately answerable to God, is the thing about him of chiefest account. All other facts which enter into human life are secondary to that. If inheritance from the past supplies to each generation certain problems to solve, the belonging to God of every soul of man in that generation is what supplies the solution for all of its problems. The fact of every man's individual relation and direct accountability to God has force to it for every generation, so mighty and binding that all stress of inherited tendency must give way before it. What mean they by this proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son."

And is not the message one which has place to-day as well as in that far away time? If we are not so much given to speaking in proverbs as were the Israelites of old, we often say very much the same things in more prosaic form. Where they talked about the fathers eating sour grapes and the children's teeth being set on edge, we pack it all into a single word and call it heredity. But the meaning is precisely the same. And as with Israel of old that sour grapes proverb was so far over worked, is not the same thing under its modern name, being quite as much overworked in our time? The

word "heredity" is getting familiar to us all. It passes pretty freely among us. There is something rather taking about it. It sounds scientific. We find no little satisfaction in being able to use it. While we shrink somewhat from speaking about the iniquities of the fathers being visited upon the children, we talk freely about heredity, without troubling ourselves that it means much the same thing. While the old-time sour-grape proverb may seem to us rather crude and uncouth, the term "heredity" suits us exactly, and we use it glibly to say the same thing, which of old was voiced by the proverb. And is there not as much danger of overworking it in the newer form as the older. Not but what our modern term, heredity, stands for a fact. It is as true to human life in this latest age of the world as the sour-grape proverb in the days of the prophets, no less and no more. Our present day problems of life are shaped for us in no small degree by the character and the acts of former generations. There are ills enough in the world which were handed down from the fathers, as also there are blessings not a few. Some things every one of us has to suffer in consequence of faults and shortcomings of others, before we were born; as there are advantages which we all enjoy, from the virtues and good deeds of others, before we were born. If that is what we mean by heredity, all very well. It is true. It is a fact of human life, witnessed in the testimony of moral law written as by the finger of God on tables of stone, and wit-

nessed anew in this age by the most scientific study of man. But, at that, it is just one fact, to be taken alongside of another still greater, weightier, more vital still. True as it is, it is but part of the truth and the less considerable part at that. But with the length to which many people carry it, it becomes the old sour-grape philosophy of Ezekiel's time over again. Once more the message of God with respect to it is: "What mean ye by this proverb?" What do we mean by "heredity," which has come to be a word so readily current amongst us? Do we mean a kind of iron necessity, by which a man is bound to evil courses of life as the result of evil inheritance, by which inheritance of good insures a man virtue in spite of himself? Then is it an altogether overworked word. "As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel." As the Lord God still lives in this most enlightened age of the world, there is no occasion for us any more to use the word heredity in any such sour-grape sense. When that's what it means, it does mischief. It blocks the wheels of human progress in spiritual and moral life. It blunts the appeal of religion and of duty. And the form of protest to be raised against it now, is the same as in Ezekiel's day. What truth there is in it is not to be denied. There is no call whatever to dispute that there is a fact of human life, very real and very forcible, answering to our modern word, heredity. But there is reason to insist upon another fact, standing along-

side of it, equally real and of still greater force. It is the fact so strongly stated in God's word to Israel by the mouth of his prophet: "Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." Whoever our fathers on earth may have been, we have everyone of us a Father in heaven. And the fatherhood of God toward us right here in the present, is of far more account to us than any human parentage away back in the past. However much it may matter for any of us, one way or another, that our ancestors were what they were and did as they did, it is a far weightier matter for every one of us, to have a sonship from God that is close and direct. Whatever resemblances we may have to parents or grandparents, or parents still farther back, each one of us, in himself and for himself, bears stamped upon him the image of God. The place which he gives to that in his life, the use that he makes of it, do far more to determine the manner of man he is to be than all the force of heredity. It was so that Christ taught in his gospel of life to the world. This was the message sent in advance to prepare the way for his teaching: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." To the suggestion of his disciples that a certain blind man's misfortune might be due to some sin of his parents, he said: "No, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." And that was the one

fact about men, whatever their condition or antecedents, to which our Lord attached more importance than to everything else; the rich possibilities of manhood for them, by giving God his due place in their lives, by living as his children, directly answerable and freely obedient to him. The supreme claim of God, as heavenly Father, upon each soul of man, his immediate personal dealing with him, in love and in power for his eternal well-being, that, in the mind of Jesus, Son of man, is of far more account than all that can possibly be covered by the word heredity. And it is truth as vital for this generation as for any other. It is truth for which this age has the utmost of use. The very fact that much stress is being laid on the facts of heredity is so much more occasion for us to have our eyes open, to be giving full weight and force to this still greater fact. "As I live saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb: Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." No person is so tied up by inheritance from the past that it makes or unmakes him, without choice and act of his own. What the person himself chooses to do, with a view to God's supreme claim upon him, is what makes or unmakes him. No man's heredity ever was so bad that he must of necessity be a bad man, without his consenting to be. And no man's heredity ever was so good that he had to be a good man, whether or not. Many a person, of most excellent ancestry, with the balance of heredity



heavily in his favor, has made utter wreck of his life. If godly parentage could settle for any one what his character is to be, then Aaron Burr would have been a saint; but with saintly men and women for his ancestors he made himself infamous by blackest wickedness and foulest crime. Many another, on a lesser scale, has done and is doing the like. On the other hand, not a few people with the odds heavily against them on the score of inheritance have been noble men and women in spite of it. The evil done by their fathers they disallowed to themselves. In many ways the evil inheritance has brought suffering upon them. But in their very sufferings they have so committed their souls unto God as to be chastened and purified by them. The inherited hindrance they armed themselves, with God's help, to battle against, and so turned it into occasion of most glorious moral triumph.

When the late Dr. Berry of England was in this country some years ago, he enforced this truth by striking instances coming under his own observation. Upon leaving the old home land he bore commissions from several families to look up sons of theirs, somewhere in this new western world. A number of them he succeeded in finding, young men, born and nurtured in the choicest of English homes, university men some of them, but wrecked both in fortune and character by their own wayward and reckless courses of life.

Over against these he set the picture of a person in his own city of Wolverhampton, commonly

known as "The Woman in White." Such was her purity of character, such her sweet and unselfish spirit, such her shining example in all that is good, that she walked the earth as one already robed in the white linen which is the righteousness of saints.

And what was her heredity? She was born in the slums of that sootiest of "Black Country" towns. With inheritance all begrimed and befouled like the place of her birth, by God's help she came up and out from the defilement of it to be the "Woman in White," as the water lily rises and opens its pure face to the sunlight from out the black ooze and muck of a stagnant pond. By committing her soul to him whose are all souls, she washed her robes and made them white. And so it may be with each of us, so far as there is evil in the inheritance which comes to us all. Any weak strain in our moral makeup is weakness in which the divine strength will make itself perfect, if we will but lay hold upon it. No stream of inherited tendency can ever make wreck of our lives except as we ourselves consent to go with its drift. An appetite for drink, born in a man, makes a drunkard of him only when he himself does the drinking. Whatever sour grapes our fathers may have eaten, our teeth will never be very sorely on edge unless we fall to eating the sour grapes ourselves. The power of evil to work mischief upon us lies in our own consent and concurrence in evil doing. And it always works mischief for anyone to say that he cannot help doing the thing that is

wrong. With God's help at hand no man is helpless; and His help for us is laid upon one who is mighty. Whatever the stress of tendency and temptation upon us, it is for us to commit our souls unto him to whom all souls belong. Whatever our earthly antecedents, the eternal consequence of it is bound up in this, the best of heredity cannot be the making of us, unless we choose to live the life that is best. Nor can the worst of heredity be the undoing of us, if only we will give place to this as the supreme reality of our life "as I live saith the Lord God: behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine."

## THE LIGHT AND THE CLOUD.

*And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.—Ex. 13 : 21.*

*And he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining exceeding white as snow. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.—Mark 9 : 2, 3 and 7.*

Wide distance, both in time and condition, lies between these two texts. One goes back to the primitive days when God's word to men was largely in fragment and symbol. The other is at the very fullness of time, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men, with glory as of the only begotten of the Father. But there is one thing common to them both. In each God's manifesting of himself to men was partly in cloud and partly by the shining of light. In his leading of Israel from out the land of their bondage on to the land of their hope, God's presence, going before them, was signified by daily interchange between the bright and the dark. At the transfiguring of Jesus before His disciples, it was with face shining as the sun, and raiment white as the light; it was also with a cloud overshadowing, and

the voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him," came to them, not from out the more excellent glory, but from out the cloud.

The truth thus signalized is what we are now to observe and apply. God's revealing of himself to our human knowledge is at the same time a certain hiding of himself. The divine leading of us here in this world is by means of mystery as well as of illumination. The Lord goes before us in a pillar that is cloud at times, as at times it is fire. Upon the very mountain heights of our spiritual vision, where it is most blessed for us to be, where God in Christ and our life as belonging to Him stand transfigured before us bright as the sun, there is the cloud overshadowing; and also, if we will but listen, the voice addressing us out of the cloud.

The truth of this appears even on the surface. With all there is of divine revelation, God is as much a mystery to us as ever. Indeed the mystery of God seems to us so much the vaster and deeper the farther we see into the revealings which He makes of himself. Manifestation of God is not the clearing away from about Him of all that is clouded and strange. It is rather such showing of Him as makes us still more aware how largely he is concealed from our view. The more we know of God, especially as revealed in Jesus our Lord, the clearer it is in what surpassing degree He is still the Unknown. The larger our learning of Christ, as to the Father in heaven, as to his will for us

and his ways with us, the wider to us is the range of mystery outlying and compassing about. It is like the view from some mountain top. The outermost rim of vision is extended by it on every side. Along with that is the sharpened sense of what there must be beyond that outermost rim. All true knowledge of God makes us aware so much the more, how far, in himself and His ways with us, He outreaches our knowing.

Not that this is peculiar to knowledge of God. From the days of Socrates until now it is the mark of a wise man to recognize the greatness of what he does not know. Our own age, with its vast increase of knowledge as to the natural world, has confirmed it anew. We enlarge upon the strides that science has made through the last hundred years, beyond the whole sum of all the centuries before. We pity people, even a few generations back, for their ignorance of much that is commonest knowledge with us. We smile at the mystery they made of things plain as daylight to us; our acquaintance with the universe we live in is so much fuller and truer than theirs. But is the universe any the less a mystery to us than to people of old? Nay, the mystery of it is deeper than ever, by as much as we know more about it. Many things once secrets of nature are the commonplace of to-day. What then? Is nature left without any secrets? Has it become so open a book that little if anything strange or surprising lingers about it? Just the reverse.

Never did the universe present to the mind of man such a range and depth of mystery as now. And that because never before was there such range or depth to what man knows of the universe. The multiplying of knowledge has been an ever greater multiplying of what is seen to be still the unknown. Every new discovery of science is the lighting of some dark place in nature. At the same time it makes visible other and vaster regions of darkness. Newton, watching the fall of an apple, threw much light on the force of gravitation. But in so doing, he carried the whole subject up into sublimer mystery than ever, having found a place for the falling apple alongside the stars in their courses. Franklin, with his kite, cast some light on the very lightning of heaven; and discovery has gone on, till to-day we are on fairly familiar terms with that strange agent of nature. And yet the mystery of it, as it lights our dwellings and runs our errands, is deeper far than Franklin even imagined. A great flood of light has come in upon all things having life, from the researches of biology. But is there no more darkness there? Rather is it plainer than ever how immense and unfathomable is the mystery of life. Every trail in this field brings up, where? At some kind of cell, some sort of hiding place. Tear off the covering and where is the life? Gone, undiscovered as ever. Such is our knowledge of nature, of the universe throughout. Discover as much as we can, unlock as many of its secrets as possible, and

we are not rid of mystery, but face to face with new volumes and depths of it. The torch of learning, as it leads men the way forward and upward, is a pillar of cloud as well as of fire. Science, in the transfiguring with which it makes the face of things shine as the sun, has its overshadowing cloud.

Like our knowledge of the universe, in this regard, is our acquaintance with its Author, the God who is in it and over it all. His revealings of himself to us are at the same time a certain hiding of himself. His very shining into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, is attended with clouds. To learn of Christ that God is our Father is as the shining of a great light about and before us, so many dark things and dark places are illumined by it. But it does not clear the sky for us from all darkness whatever. Certain clouds overshadow us all the thicker and heavier by reason of so great a light. There is the mystery of suffering, for one thing. If God be our Father, with such love for us as our Lord made known, is it not passing strange that his appointments for us should sometimes be so painful and saddening? If God were our enemy, then we could understand that it would please him to put us to grief. But with His infinitude of kindness and tenderness toward us, what in all the world is quite so hard to understand as our griefs and sorrows? The very love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, going



before us, leading us the way, is a pillar both of cloud and fire. Along with its transfiguring light, in which so many things about and above us shine as the sun, it, too, has its overshadowing cloud. What was the real cloud into which those disciples of His entered on the mountain top? It was the decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. That is what He spoke of there with Moses and Elijah, and from that time had much to say about to His disciples. It was His cross whose shadow hung as a cloud over the transfiguring glory. From out that mystery of all mysteries God speaks full-voiced to us, saying, "This is my beloved Son; this man, wholly well-pleasing to me, is the Man of Sorrows. This is my love, that I give Him unto death for your life." To know the love of God in self-sacrifice equal to that, is it not to be more aware than ever of depths and heights and lengths and breadths to it, by which it passes our knowledge? There to behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, is it not, also, to behold how greatly He is a God that hideth himself, whose ways are past finding out?

And just here we are most apt to quarrel with divine revelation. It leaves us still so much in the dark, leaves so many things still undiscovered. If God wants us to know Him as our loving Father, why should He make so great a mystery of it at times? Why does He keep himself so much in hiding from us. If He would show us His glory, why put us in a cleft of the rock, cover us with

His hand and make His goodness pass before us so that at best we can see only the back of it? Why not make His loving-kindness so manifest to us that it should be all light, without clouds or darkness at all? And sometimes we turn away from what light there is, because of the cloud that overshadows. We refuse what Christ makes manifest of God, because it is likewise so manifest that in much He is still beyond our knowing.

But not thus do we quarrel with revealings and knowledge in other fields. The light of science upon the world we live in is very welcome to us; we gladly learn all we can about it, while such light and learning make us all the more aware what a world of mystery it is. We do not refuse light to walk by and work with because of what it leaves still in the dark. The electric lamp is highly convenient, is greatly serviceable for us, while its very shining is largely problem and puzzle to us. The sunshine itself is a sevenfold mystery of color. For that matter, there are rays of darkness as well as of color in the sunshine. Some of them we call the X-rays, simply because so little is known about them. But for all that the sunlight is pleasant to see; is so good and helpful for every activity of life. The very X-rays and other dark parts of the sunshine we are finding to be of use.

And shall it not be equally so with the light of God which shines for us in the face of Jesus Christ? Though clouds and darkness may be still about Him, is He not the light come into the world to lighten

every man? Shall we not open our eyes to it, welcome it to walk in and work by, much as it may leave still unrevealed? It is the Lord himself who goes before us, leading us the way, in the cloud as well as in the fire. The very mystery of God, as well as His illumination is ministry for us as we have life's journey to make. It is good for us to be with the Son of Man as His garments of our humanity glisten whiter than archangels' robes, for out of the very cloud which overshadows is the voice which speaks to us, the voice of our Father, saying: "This is my Son, my well-beloved, well-pleasing to me, hear ye him."

But, it will be asked, what help to us from the mystery of God, along with His revealings of himself? Much help, and in more than one way. First of all it helps us to some due sense of the divine greatness. Were God's revealings of himself such as to make no impression upon us of the unknown and inscrutable in Him, our idea of God would be neither very large nor very sublime. We should not reverence Him much. Nothing awakens in us so great respect for a thing as to find that the farther we study into it, the more of it there is still to be learned. It is so that our learning of God inspires us with reverence for Him. Because the utmost of His revealing leaves Him still so much in hiding, we get some proper sense of how great He is. If our knowledge of God and His ways did not stand out against such background of the dark and unknown we should not look up

to Him, we should the rather look down upon Him. He would be to us no greater than ourselves, not so great, for who of us but is largely a mystery to himself! The Lord goes before us in the cloud, as well as the fire, to lead us the way, that He may bring us to some due sense of His greatness. Along with the more excellent glory of His transfigured Son, He speaks to us out of the overshadowing cloud, that we may recognize Him not only as our Father, but as Father of an infinite majesty.

Again, the mystery of God, along with His divine revealings, helps us by quickening in us aspiration most intense and devout. What we think we know all about soon gets tiresome to us; its interest and zest for us are short-lived. Once let science satisfy us that she has laid open the last secret which the universe holds, and we would sicken of science and find the universe itself a tame and tedious affair. It is by the mysteries which nature keeps ever flaunting in our faces, that she invites and provokes us to study and work in her various fields. Were she to keep no secrets from us, how listless and shiftless she would very soon make us. In like manner, as one has said, "If we could know God exhaustively and at once, the thought of Him would soon become a monotonous truism and a distasteful platitude. We should weary of God, if He were less than infinite in every aspect and direction. If God's revelation were without reserved questions in it, the very enchantment of it would be gone, the splendor

vanish like a tropical sunset." But not such is our God; nor such the manifesting that He makes of himself. There is ample reserve with Him, of truth and love, of goodness and knowledge of himself to keep us ever aspiring, forever following on to know him as our Father. Crowning all is the unfading inheritance reserved for us as his children, the unending surprise of the life to come. For what would immortality be but weariness, world without end, were there not depths and freshness of infinite wisdom and goodness to be forever unfolding?

Once more, the mystery attending divine revelation has ministry to it, in often safeguarding for us the pathway of life. When God's way for Israel lay through the sea, their pillar of cloud and fire, we are told, stood all night between them and their foes, so they came not near one another. How many a passage of life is made safe for us in much that way. There are perils besetting our path which never quite reach us, from the mercy of our God in not letting us know too much about them. I remember from my boyhood the burning of a barn in which were valuable horses. Attempt after attempt to get them out failed, for, dazzled by the fire, they would not stir. At length a man having better understanding of horses brought them all safely out, just by drawing their blankets over their heads, so they could not see at all, but were led by him. Somewhat thus, at times, is our Father's, our Saviour's rescuing of us from the

glare of our passions, from out the blaze of an alluring world.

And then the path for gaining the sublimer levels of life we often would fail to travel at all did not the Lord go before us, leading us the way in the cloud as well as the fire. I once climbed the Riffel Alp, for what is perhaps the grandest Swiss mountain view to be reached by an average good walker, without apparatus or guide. The wildest part of the road I passed all alone in the midst of a dense enveloping cloud. It was like walking in some half-lighted crypt or tunnel. The rocks and tree trunks on either hand were walled in with mist, the tree tops overhead were like tracery in a vault of cloud. I could see little except a few rods of the pathway rising steep and rugged before me. Afterward, from above, when the cloud had lifted, I looked down and saw where lay the pathway by which I had come. In places it threaded the edge of a sheer precipice, which would have made my head swim had I known it was there. But the kindly cloud had hidden it from me, and the upward path, otherwise perhaps too fearful for me, was entirely safe. Is it not so that we are brought, sometimes, up to life's higher levels? Not only is it kindly light that leads us through the encircling gloom, but the encircling gloom itself is kindly. "O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent," we are led on, surely and safely, by the merciful hiding of much from our sight. At length, from above, the gloom gone, our looking

down upon the path by which we have come is to see how kindly was not only the light but also the cloud. It was so that the Lord went before Israel, leading them in the way. The loving-kindness of their God was in the cloud as well as in the fire. To those disciples of Jesus at his transfiguration, it was good to be there, good to be under the overshadowing cloud, as well as to behold the more excellent glory; for out of the cloud the divine message came: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." And there is the same divine message for us to be hearing. Along with the shining face and the glistening garments the very cloud gives us witness to our Father's good pleasure, to the loving-kindness of our God.

## AN ADDRESS AT THE VESPER SERVICE, CORNELL UNIVER- SITY, SUNDAY, DEC. 9, 1906.\*

The noblest achievement of which the sculptor's art is capable, we get our best idea of from masterpieces now marred and broken. A Venus of Melos with both arms missing, a fragment of Parthenon frieze, with its figures cracked and chipped, tell us more of the perfection to which work in stone can be carried than any piece of modern sculpture, fresh and flawless from the artist's hands.

It is somewhat like this with our ideas of the finest and noblest possibilities in human life and character. We get our most vivid impressions of them, we get our profoundest conviction of their reality, not so much from lives that fill out a full round of years and have a certain earthly completeness to them, as from lives that have been broken off in the midst of their years, lives cut short just as the highest promise of them was

\* On arrival at Cornell University, Dec. 7, 1906, for a Sunday as university preacher, Mr. Brodie found the entire community in deep grief. In the destruction, by fire, of the Chi Psi fraternity house, that morning, four students and three citizens had lost their lives. At Vesper service on the following Sunday Mr. Brodie gave the above address.



beginning to unfold, as rare powers of mind and soul were fairly entered upon their first development. Such fragments often give us our deepest and clearest insight into the utmost of which life is capable, the noblest that character can become.

Indeed, it is just this fragmentary aspect of human life, even when coming nearest to earthly completeness, that is most strongly suggestive of the real greatness belonging to our humanity. No human life, however well rounded out, attains its completeness here in this world. No human character, however abundant its fruits, ever brings them all to their ripeness before it disappears from the earth. There are always some beginnings not yet fulfilled. And with by far the larger number of lives nobly lived, with by far the larger number of characters worthily formed, it is the beginnings, not the completions to be seen in them, that gives them their significance and worth. Every true life, every great character is, more than anything else, one chapter after another of large and excellent beginnings. No person's achievement in this world is much more than a good start at something which he has succeeded in making.

Nowhere is the truth of this more clear than in the case of Him who is example and pattern for all other men. The life of Jesus we are accustomed to speak of as the one perfect human life; His character, the measure of the stature of manhood in all its fullness. And yet what life ever had more

the appearance of being cut short in the midst of its days! What other life, in which any such great and glorious beginnings were left before anything like fulfillment and finishing could be given to them! So strong was the feeling of this in the minds of His first disciples, that one evangelist calls his story of that life "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ," while another refers to his account of it as "A treatise of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." It is in the things of which he made such perfect beginnings that we find the perfection of Jesus, Son of Man, upon the earth.

And so it is of every other human life which is at all after the example and quality of his. So it is of every life having real significance and worth. Its life story, be it longer or shorter as a matter of years, is largely the story of beginnings well made. Its biography is largely made up of things well started upon, but still far short of anything like completion. Take this as a key in the reading of biography, and see how it helps to unlock the meaning of lives lived on a scale large enough to be put on record and to command the interest of after generations. It is true of a life like Gladstone's, covering more than fourscore years, the long chain of whose eventful career is just one link after another of fresh beginnings, and at the end a broken link. With a life like Lincoln's, suddenly cut off just when its highest usefulness seemed opening to it, this stands out the most

impressive thing about it. And there are still shorter lives, full of rich promise, but early coming to their earthly end, of whom it can simply be said, they have just begun to live. But really, that is what all true and worthy life is, in this world—just beginning to live. It is there that the meaning and value of our human life is to be read. What good beginnings are there in it? If we ask as to its achievements, these, too, are but things at which it has well begun.

Such is the fact of our life brought home to us with great keenness and force, when suddenly young lives full of promise are snatched from us by swift disaster or disease. Such death seems so untimely! The sadness of it is doubly sad! Such high hopes shattered! Such goodly beginnings falling short of anything like their fitting fulfillment! But saddening a fact as it is, there is something besides sadness to it. It is, at the same time, one of the surest of all grounds we have for most cherished and inspiring hope. Just because our human life at its best is so largely a matter of uncompleted beginnings, there is basis of soundest reason that we believe in immortality and the eternal life. Such faith and hope spring not simply out of fancy and desire. Here is something in the nature of fact, something with reality to it for them to rest upon. In every true human life, be it longer or shorter, there are beginnings, of such a kind and on such a scale that this world does not give scope for their completion. Human

character with worth to it is a building whose design and material both require another world for its fulfilling and finishing. Would it be reasonable to conclude that such glorious beginnings are left forever fragmentary and incomplete? Can we easily believe that such fair blossoming, in its season here upon the earth, has nowhere in all the universe of God any season or climate in which to reach the fullness of its fruiting and ripening? Can it be that the one thing of infinite worth in this world of ours, the human spirit with the capabilities of life and character that are in it, is to stop short, with at most a good beginning and never find fulfillment commensurate with its powers? Then is it out of keeping with all else in the universe of God. Truer by far, more reasonable and easier to believe, is that memorable line cut in stone beside your Cornell Library portal, "God finishes the work by noble souls begun," and finishes not only the work which they left incomplete, but finishes the lives themselves still incomplete upon laying down their work. Every noble life begun upon the earth is itself the beginning of a work too precious in the sight of God, too eternal in the scope and quality of it, to be left simply at that. The force of this truth, it would seem, came in upon the minds of the first Christian disciples to confirm them in their faith that Jesus was alive again after his suffering unto death. At any rate one of them said, speaking of his death, "It was not possible that he should be

holden of it." In view of what he had known Jesus to be, in his holy life and character as Son of Man; in view of all he had witnessed of what Jesus began both to do and teach, to him it was not difficult to believe that He was alive again. The difficult thing, the well-nigh impossible thing, would have been belief that such beginnings could be stopped short of anything like fulfillment by the tragedy of his cross. The miracle was not the resurrection of Jesus. Had the life that Jesus began to live through three and thirty years, and the things he therein began to do and teach, all ceased with the breath and pulse-beats of his crucified body, that would have been the miracle, most staggering both to reason and to faith. It was not possible that he should be holden of it. Here is our solidest ground of assurance in him as the ever-living Lord. The life he lived upon earth, the manner of man he was and work he did are beginnings requiring such fulfillment. And it is the like sure ground we have for our hope of immortality and the eternal life. Other grounds there may be that lend it reinforcement and support. But the strength of our faith and hope is here. Those human lives cut short while all is still promise with them, those other lives, which with the utmost of earthly attainment are still little more than incomplete beginnings, call for fulfillment corresponding to their qualities and powers.

What meaning is there to life in a great univer-

sity unless there be the greater world of life beyond into which its graduates are to go forth for the fulfillment of its beginnings? What meaning to be made out of the maze of a university curriculum were there no life for the students of it after the day of graduation? Much so is it with the curriculum in this university of our earthly life. It is at best a life of beginnings for fulfillment and completion in the world that is to come. And when all is said, what better could it be than that? Sad as it is to witness the cutting short of brightest earthly promise, it is at the same time witness giving ground for the surest hope. The cutting short may be but the short cut to speediest and largest completion of noblest beginnings. Here at any rate is good comfort to take amid the saddening shadows which have fallen so lately on this university and city. The flower of young student manhood, and the flower of heroic citizenship come to its rescue, fallen together! These young men were well known to you. What brightness of promise was in them, what goodly beginnings of noble life they had made, you can bear witness. To miss them out of your own lives is distress and loss. But there is this as well to be gained: their promise cut short, their beginnings of life left incomplete are new entries in the volume of witness that life well begun here in this world will surely come to its fulfillment in a world with room enough to realize fairest promises and most abounding hopes. So do they add meaning and richness for

us all to the words already quoted, words already monumental on the Cornell campus, and made still more monumental by their early death, words which may well serve to sum up and seal the impressions of this hour:

“God finishes the work by noble souls begun.”











